

LAND ADMINISTRATION IN 'IRAQ  
FROM THE MUHAMMADAN PERIOD TO  
PRESENT TIMES; BASED ON ORIGINAL  
ARABIC SOURCES AND OFFICIAL  
ADMINISTRATION REPORTS



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**T H E S I S**

**presented for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the  
University of London  
by**

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## SYNOPSIS OF THESIS

1. An introductory chapter deals with the general description of 'Iraq, its area, size, shape, boundaries, surface, and other physical features; rivers, soil, natural history, climate, the people, agriculture, minerals, industries, and manufactures.
2. The first chapter is a brief history of the province. The period of Turkish occupation is described. British influence is traced through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century; the early days of British Military Occupation to the Arab rebellion of 1920; the formation of the 'Iraq Provisional Government and the election of the Emir in 1921.
3. Some of the questions involved in this work are set out: the natural potentialities of 'Iraq; the early condition of 'Iraq; the causes leading to its decay are traced. The present labour shortage; the country could become a world market; religious differences. Arabs are classified: nomad, semi-nomad and settled; the position of Arab women; tribal characteristics; the mode of Ottoman administration; the productivity, with details of crops;



antiquities of 'Iraq; a comparison with Scotland and South Africa; comparison with Oudh. British efforts, and an introduction to one of the main issues - Land Tenure.

4. The question of Land Tenure treated historically, and a description of conditions in pre-Islamic, Islamic, and Ottoman times. The Turkish Land Code explained. Land Laws and Tapu in detail; the judicial aspect of Land Tenure set out. Unreliable accounts of the early systems; incongruity between theory and facts as revealed in a series of incidents set forth here.
5. The Sa'dun as a peculiar agrarian problem; the history of the Sa'dun; the attempt at settlement under the Turks - Midhat Pasha; recent efforts at solution; possible solutions. A further example of failure in the attempt to impose a theoretical system which ignores the normal conditions.
6. Land Revenue; assessment under the Turks; date cultivation; the Government share; apportionment of revenue demand; relations between landlord, tenant, and fellahs; the farming of taxes; subsidies and rebates; land registration. The collection of land revenue from the "farmer" - the division on the threshing floor. The 'Khalasiyah' - The Madhif -



tribal customs. System of harvesting; modes of transport.

7. The irrigation of 'Iraq; early times and the successful system employed; rivers and canalisation; historical survey leading to Turkish times; the British occupation and recent efforts. The present situation.
  8. Summary of conclusions through a survey of the last decade.
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### NOTE ON CHRONOLOGY

In the course of this work Islamic and Christian chronology have both been used.

A convenient approximate method of converting a Muslim to a Christian year is to divide by 33, subtract quotient from dividend and add 622.

To convert from Christian to Muslim, subtract 622, divide remainder by 33 and add quotient to dividend. A variation may ensue of as much as two years.<sup>1</sup>

A.H. to A.D. may be approximated by the formula:<sup>2</sup>

$$\text{A.H.} - \frac{3 \text{ A.H.}}{100} + 621 = \text{A.D.}$$

thus A.H. 906 = 1500 A.D; 1318 A.H. = 1900 A.D.

<sup>1</sup> Longrigg - "Four Centuries of Modern 'Iraq" - Oxford, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> Mohammedanism - D.S. Margoliouth - Home University Library.



## P R E F A C E

The material for the present work is mostly derived from native sources, the result of four years' administrative work amongst the Arabs in various parts of 'Iraq under war and post-war conditions. My duties as Political Officer and Magistrate took me from Basrah in the south to Mosul in the north, and Zubair, Khamisiyah, Nasiriyah, and Hillah on the River Euphrates, thus bringing me into contact with the conditions and affairs of the tribes roaming in the central Arabian Desert and the more important areas in 'Iraq. For the most part, my duties consisted of matters affecting land administration, and since this question is of primary importance in any administration, and particularly in that of the Arabs, I decided to choose it for special examination in the light of this experience.

During the War, with its attendant unsettled general and local conditions, it was almost impossible to make any close examination of the conditions in the 'Iraq of to-day and to compare these with the conditions of bygone ages. The interesting question arises as to how far any of the conditions as they exist to-day are an inheritance, how far the earlier



systems of land administration have survived, whether any modifications have occurred, and, if so, when and to what extent; and whether there has been any real continuity. Such questions as these involve years of labour and demand attention.

It is hoped that this exposition of the nature of Land Administration in the 'Iraq of to-day may prepare the way for a fuller presentation of the questions involved. It may perhaps be claimed that some small addition to the stock of available information on the subject has been made - sufficient, it is hoped, to meet the conditions prescribed in the Regulations of the University. Moreover, it is urged that, owing to the changes in administration which have taken place since the accession of the Emir Faisal, many of the experiences which are set out in this work were obtained in peculiar circumstances and under conditions which are not likely to recur.

Since leaving the country in 1921 I have been in touch with developments, and have followed very closely the various changes that have taken place. The information thus acquired has been utilised and incorporated in order to describe the position as accurately as possible up to the time of submitting the work.



The Bibliography reveals the poverty of works on the subject.

The history of the rise and progress of Civilisation appeals to many to-day as a fascinating study; the human element, with a record of continual achievement, maintains the strength of the appeal. The Orient occupies a place of considerable importance in the evolution of civilisation; indeed, early Europe owes it no small debt.

The system of transliteration is that of the British Academy (see Report of the Committee contained in the Proceedings of the British Academy, Vol. VIII).

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Map showing density of population.

Ancient Mesopotamia.

Tribal map of Arabia.



## INTRODUCTION

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### 'IRAQ

Origin and name; general characteristics;  
size; shape; boundaries.

Surface and general features; rivers; soil.

Natural History; climate.

The people; occupations; tribal system; Islam.

Agriculture; industries; language; minerals.



'IRAQ.ORIGIN AND NAME.

The area considered in this work is, except for a slight variation in the northern boundary, that which was included in the Turkish wilayats of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basrah. Since the conquest by the Arabs, the area which was covered by ancient Babylonia has been known as Arab " 'Iraq", and this extends between the two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, roughly from about latitude  $34^{\circ}$  to the Persian Gulf. The term 'Iraq in this work refers, however, to the whole area which is at present administered by the Central Government at Baghdad, and includes not only the alluvial plain to the south, but also the area to the north known as the Jezireh (the island), and embraces a district of rolling and undulating plain, intersected here and there by outcrops of rocks and by spurs from the mountains ending in the edge of the table lands of Armenia and Asia Minor to the north, and the great plateau of Persia to the north-east. Whilst Basrah is 5 feet above sea level, and Baghdad, about 375 miles from Basrah or 350 miles from the sea in a



straight line, is 105 feet, Mosul, over 600 miles from the Gulf, is 980 feet.

#### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS.

Thus 'Iraq is a vast depression from the mountains of the north and north-east, although it contains a low plateau within it. This depression from the northern mountains is at first steep, but the steepness gradually diminishes as the rivers Tigris and Euphrates come closer together on the line of Baghdad and Fellujah. From this point there is a sudden change: the great alluvial basin begins here and stretches southwards to the Persian Gulf for 350 miles. The country divides itself into a district of mountains and hills, a district of undulating plain, and finally a very fertile plain. The greater part of the population is occupied in agricultural pursuits. In the north there is a comparatively healthy desert climate, whilst in the south there is an unhealthy region of swamps.

#### SIZE, SHAPE AND BOUNDARIES.

The area of 'Iraq, which is something like a long, narrow parallelogram, is 116,511 square miles, and is irregular in shape.

On the west the boundary line is in the Arabian



and Syrian deserts; on the east a defined boundary was fixed just before the Great War by the Turco-Persian Frontier Commission, but as the Report was never ratified, the exact line cannot be stated; in the south the Persian territory of the Shaikh of Muhammarah forms the boundary. The Persian frontier, like the Syrian frontier, is the home of tribesmen, but the Kurds of the eastern border are only semi-nomadic and have fixed and recognised migrations. They pass the winter in the lower ground of 'Iraq, where they engage in cultivation, and they go up in summer with their flocks to the Persian highlands<sup>1</sup>. In the north the exact delineation cannot be stated as it is the subject of enquiry at the present time<sup>2</sup>. The line roughly runs east and west through a point on the Tigris between Mosul and Jeziret-ibn-Omar. This is in theory determined by the Anglo-French Boundary Convention of 1920, but the Commission provided for in

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Report (1925) p.51.

<sup>2</sup> The Anglo-Turkish Treaty of June, 1926, Chapter I, deals with the Brussels line and entrusts the delimitation to a Commission.



the Convention to trace the boundary line has not yet come into being, and the actual frontier of the territories administered respectively by 'Iraq and Syria has for purposes of convenience been left approximately as it was before the signature of the Convention. Thus the 'Iraq has continued to administer the whole of the Jabel Sinjar, while on the Euphrates the boundary fixed in May, 1920, by the British Government of Occupation and the Arab Government of Syria has been adhered to, leaving to Syria the 'Iraq half of the village of Albu Kamal and a strip extending seven miles to the south.

The administrative frontier runs for the whole of its length through deserts without settled habitation, but two great nomadic groups, the Shammar and the 'Anizah, roam over the area which it traverses, the Shammar to the east of the Euphrates, the 'Anizah mainly to the west, the frontier line cutting through their grazing grounds. The tribesmen, unaccustomed to an artificial boundary, pay scant attention to it. Shammar or 'Anizah shaikhs do not seek a passport when they wish to visit one of their kindred on the other side of a border which is at the best vaguely known; nor, if the object of the expedition be hostile, do they hesitate to raid an enemy who has recently become the subject of another state. Nevertheless, when convenient, the frontier may be put to service. Unwonted



activity on the part of Government officials in the collection of sheep and camel tax, or the pursuit of criminals, may point to the advisability of "seeking pasturage" in the adjacent country, while if the favour of the Government is not found on one side of the border there is always the possibility of a change of nationality by the mere shifting of the black tents into a region where those in power may be more generously inclined. These anomalies, inherent in a desert frontier, might prove rich in international complications but for the close co-operation of the authorities concerned. The High Commissioner for 'Iraq has never sought in vain the help of the High Commissioner in Syria in the solution of their common problems, and the same excellent relations exist between the local officials, whether European or Arab.

#### SURFACE AND GENERAL FEATURES.

The Jezireh is a low plateau composed of limestone and sedimentary formations, intersected by low ranges of limestone, gypsum, and basalt; it slopes from the southern spurs of the Taurus and other ranges southwards to where it ends in the great alluvial plain of 'Iraq proper. The undulating plain of the northern section has good soil, plenty of water, and a good rainfall. These favourable conditions diminish with increasing distance



from the mountains, where the sloping plain assumes the character of the Syrian Desert lying to its west. The ruins of innumerable towns and villages, the fact that it was the home of the Assyrian Empire with Nineveh, the modern Mosul its centre, the importance of this tract in Persian, Greek, Roman, and Arab times, testify to what it was in the past. The Jebel Sinjar forms the natural boundary between the upper and lower areas. The lower section from Baghdad to the south is a perfect plain, falling only 220 feet to the sea in 350 miles. It is a sheet of most fertile alluvium interspersed with occasional pockets of stiff clay. Sand is sometimes met, but not in great quantities. There is not a stone in the country. There are depressions of vast extent which are frequently flooded by the overflow of the rivers. Throughout the great alluvial plain the boundless horizon is unrelieved by a single range or hill, and is unbroken save by the artificial mounds, which are the silent evidence of the existence of bygone civilizations. The mass of solid matter which the rivers deposit is very considerable. The appearance of the mirage (serab) is very common. In the spring, in spite of much labour and care expended on the banks of the rivers and on irrigation channels, the floods are very extensive. Everywhere the country is intersected with ancient canals, some still deep dry beds;



the Tigris canals are, however, not so numerous as those of the Euphrates.

### RIVERS.

The rivers of 'Iraq are the Euphrates, Tigris, and Karun. The Euphrates passes through three distinct phases in its course to the sea; its two main sources lie high in the Armenian plateau; at Hit the river enters its delta after passing through a reef of limestone rocks abounding in bitumen springs, and here it is about 250 yards in width. Its course continues through the alluvial plain and marshes, and after bifurcations between Museyib and Samawah and below Nasiryah, it reaches the Shatt-al-Arab through large shallow lakes which have been compared to the Norfolk broads. The course of the Tigris is similar. The two chief sources occur near those of the Euphrates, and drain the south-eastern ranges of Armenia. They unite some sixty miles below Diarbekr. After flowing through winding gorges and rolling country, the river passes below Mosul through steppe and desert, until below Samarra it reaches the alluvial plain. The affluents are on the left bank, where the drainage of the Kurdish hills is brought in by a number of streams, of which the most notable are the Greater and Lesser Zab, and the Diyalah. At Baghdad the Euphrates and Tigris are within 40 miles of each other, but soon diverge to a distance of 100 miles. Below Amarah the



Tigris is much reduced by the numerous canals which carry a great proportion of its water into extensive swamps.

At Qurnah the Tigris joins the Euphrates; there is an arm of the Euphrates however which carries some water from the Hammar Lake and eventually joins the combined waters at Gurmat Ali, a few miles above Basrah.

The Karun river takes its rise in the highlands of Luristan, enters the plains at Shustar, and, breaking through a low transverse range at Ahwaz, flows in a steady and tortuous course through sparsely inhabited but fertile country, the plains of southern Arabistan, to join the Shatt-al-Arab at Muhammarah.

#### SOIL.

The general character of the soils in both the Tigris and Euphrates valleys is that of a light calcareous loam, remarkably free even in its natural state from sterilizing salts. This is especially true of a large tract east of Baghdad and the country between the Tigris and Euphrates in the same latitude. Near the Euphrates, however, saline efflorescence is to be observed in places; and below Kut-al-Amarah on the Tigris and Diwaniyah on the Euphrates, the proportion of sand is excessive except in the marshes. The admixture of sand is probably due to the sand blown in from the Arabian Desert.



## NATURAL HISTORY - FAUNA.

To judge from the reliefs and paintings discovered at Nineveh, Nimrud, Babylon and elsewhere, lions must have been very numerous in 'Iraq, but they are now extinct, as also are leopards, tigers and wolves. However, hyenas, jackals, foxes and hares are common throughout the country. Wild pig is to be found in the marshes and in the Jezireh - the northern portion - gazelles abound.

Of domestic animals the camel takes first place; it is of the one-humped species, and presents two varieties: the riding camel of high breed, slight make, clean limbed, thoroughbred, and capable of great and continuous exertions, ambling at a steady pace of six miles an hour for several days; and the baggage camel, which corresponds to the cart horse, is of heavy build, carries from four hundred to six hundred pounds, and can march from fifteen to twenty-five miles a day. Horses come next, and these are used in the main for riding purposes, although many baggage horses are found from Baghdad to the north and north-east. Asses are used for the transportation of goods, and other animals are buffaloes, cattle, goats and sheep, some of these latter being of the long-tailed, and others of the fat-tailed variety. 'Pariah' dogs abound in the towns and villages. The selugi is a type of greyhound used for sporting purposes; recently this breed of dog has become fairly popular in England.



Of birds of prey there are kites, hawks, bustards, ravens, and crows. The game birds are partridge, quail, goose, duck, and snipe, which are found in fairly large quantities; whilst the great marshes teem with herons, bitterns, pelicans, and other aquatic birds.

Snakes are common, and flies are a plague, whilst in and near the marsh areas mosquitoes and sand flies are unpleasantly numerous. From time to time plagues of locusts visit 'Iraq.

The rivers produce fish, almost all of which are fit for consumption by Arabs, and some by Europeans. Water tortoises are found in the rivers. Sharks up to six feet in length visit Baghdad in the hot season. The marshes harbour frogs in myriads.

#### FLORA.

The physical conditions of the country and the scanty rainfall limit the flora; crops are dealt with in greater detail subsequently, and a note of wild plants only will be given here. Neither forests nor woods occur, but along the banks of the rivers and canals the Euphrates poplar grows, interspersed with low tamarisk jungle; there is also the safsaf, a kind of willow, which gives a good shade. There is no lack of reeds, sedges, and rushes in the swamps. Shok, a small thorny plant, is common in the dry tracts, as also are small shrubs and grasses eaten by camels.



Colocynth and liquorice are vegetable products which are of commercial value.

#### CLIMATE.

The climate is sub-tropical, the main features being large daily and annual ranges of temperature, lack of moisture in the atmosphere, and a winter rainfall which is sufficient for Dhaim cultivation - the catch-crop growth of cereals. Since the rainfall alone is insufficient, the land depends upon the waters of its two great rivers which draw their supply largely from the snowfall in the mountains of Armenia, and they are at their height in April and May. The average rainfall in inches is: Basrah (over 18 years) 6.6; Baghdad (over 29 years) 6.64; Mosul (over 4 years) 16.71. (These figures may be compared with 23.16", the mean annual rainfall at London.)

The fall of rain during the few winter months leaves a long rainless summer from April or May to October. The temperature during this time reaches as much as 120° in the shade, whilst in 1921 a shade temperature of 128° was recorded. On the other hand a sharp frost is often experienced in the winter, and Mosul has registered over 30°F below freezing point. The summer heat is tempered by the excessive dryness of the atmosphere and by the prevailing wind.



## THE PEOPLE OF 'IRAQ.

According to a census taken in 1920, the population of 'Iraq is nearly three millions, there being about twenty-four inhabitants per square mile; at least three quarters of the population are tribesmen<sup>1</sup>. Over two and a half millions are Muhammadans, made up of Shiahs and Sunnis, with the former in a slightly larger proportion. Jews exceed eighty thousand, Christians number nearly eighty thousand; the rest of the population, roughly forty thousand, are of mixed religions. The Arabs, who predominate and who form the most characteristic part of the population, vary from the partly Europeanized Ashraf (notables) of Baghdad to the almost Bedouin population of the "desert ports", such as Khamisiyah and Zobeir; from sections of ancient tribes, famous in pre-Muhammadan verse such as Beni Tamim and Khazraj to the wild "Marsh Arabs" of Lower Mesopotamia, who are hardly recognised as Arabs by the rest of the population; from sheep rearing tribes, nomad or semi-nomad, to men who have cultivated the same date gardens for generations and have long lost their tribal characteristics. The cleavage between Shiah and Sunni and between sedentary and nomad

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Report, 1925 - p.83.



Arab is profound, but these lines of division do not coincide: a Sunni Arab is not necessarily a nomad, nor is a Shiah Arab necessarily a cultivator. If the Arabs were united in pursuits, disposition, character, religion and interests, they would constitute a very formidable body. As it is the raiding instincts and predatory habits of the nomads and semi-nomads cause anxiety from time to time among the more settled population.

The Arab is essentially a man of the plains; he remains in the great deserts and rarely penetrates into the higher mountain regions. His mind is lively, imaginative, and subtle, and he frequently shows remarkable power of discussing intelligently any subject within the range of his experience. In practical issues, however, where constructive ability and energy are needed, he appears to be incompetent and lazy. Education is in a rudimentary stage; the whole of the tribes are illiterate. The social organisation is patriarchal, and consequently most of the people, even if they have opinions of their own, follow those of their tribal chiefs or the land-owners on whom they are dependent. The pure-bred tribal Arab has a high ideal of conduct in so far as courtesy, dignity, hospitality and generosity are concerned, and can appreciate a display of such qualities in others, but he seems to have a natural bent for intrigue; a promise, unless sworn on the



Qur'an, is of little moment, and a fondness for money leads to much unscrupulousness.

### OCCUPATIONS.

In Arab life there are the following classes:- the town-dwellers, the agriculturalists - whether semi-nomad or nomad (some of these own and cultivate land, but move with flocks during the year in search of pasture); and the true nomads, who live and move about in the desert.

Tribal feuds and petty raids are frequent; a skirmish with Government troops provides the tribesmen with a change of opponents from time to time. Ghazus (raids) form part of the annual programme of events among the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes.

### TRIBAL SYSTEM.

The tribal system of the Arabs is not rigid, for changes are continually taking place, due in the main to loss or gain of sections or individuals who transfer for the sake of offence or defence.

At one time a tribe may consider itself an independent unit or a member of a confederacy. Sections and individuals are freely received by tribes, and numerous quarrels ensue. The tribes are managed through their shaikhs or chiefs, whose power depends very largely on personality and ability to control many relations. Disputes in ordinary



tribal life are generally settled by the shaikh, assisted oft times by a Sayyid. Tribal councils are used to settle the larger troubles; the constitution is agreed upon by the contesting parties, but their methods are of interminable length and leave much to be desired. The two stringent articles of the unwritten tribal code relating to protection and assistance are a more pleasing feature of tribal life. A person throwing himself on the protection of another must be defended, and may not be given up, whatever the cost; and a guest formally claiming assistance is entitled to full support. This latter injunction would prove intolerable were it not that pride and custom forbid a tribesman availing himself of it except as a last resource. A blood feud may be composed by the payment of a fixed sum of blood money, the amount of which varies locally, but often pride conquers and the feud continues through succeeding generations.

All the Persians in 'Iraq live in cities and towns, chiefly Kerbala, Najaf, Basrah and Baghdad. They are of course all Shiahs, and are engaged either in trade or in ministering to the wants of pilgrims at the great Shiah shrines of Kerbala, Najaf and Kadhimain. The Jews, too, live in the towns, mainly Baghdad and Basrah, and from their occupations as traders and money-lenders they thrive and are an important element in commercial affairs.



The small communities of Sabaeans at Suq and Amarah are interesting. Although they have a peculiar physiognomy, they dress like the Arabs. Many are boat builders and carpenters, but the majority are workers in silver and antimony.

Foreigners include Europeans, Americans, and Asiatics. The former are either political representatives, traders or missionaries, whilst the Asiatics are either in business or private service, most of them having stayed in the country after a pilgrimage or after the war.

#### ISLAM.

Of the population of 'Iraq comprising Moslems, Christians, Jews, Sabaeans and Hindus, the Moslems are by far the most important. The preponderance of Islam rests even less on the numerical superiority than on the historic part played by 'Iraq in the development of the Muhammadan power and faith. It was here that the events occurred which culminated in the Shiah schism; here, too, was the seat of the Baghdad Khalifate, and here at Kerbala, Kadhimain, Najaf, Samarrah and Kufah are shrines venerated at least equally with Mecca and Medina in Shiah Muslim estimation. The tenets of Islam, which claims to be a divinely revealed religion



given to the world by Muhammad as the last of a succession of inspired messengers, are described in many learned treatises. The chief denominations of Islam are Shiah and Sunni. The Sunnis of 'Iraq are found mostly in the Jezireh, whilst most of the Arabs of the area below Baghdad are Shiahs. There is a considerable Sunni element however in the population of Basrah, Zubair and Khamisiyah. Sunnis in 'Iraq are not fanatical, but the same cannot be said of the Shiahs. It is outside the sphere of this outline to deal at any length with the two sects and their outstanding features, but in passing it may be noted that the Shiah Mujtahids have been responsible for the undoing of many of our well-intentioned efforts. Najaf and Kerbala, more particularly Najaf, have long been the centres of religious fanaticism of a Persian type, centres also of hostility to existing authority, and will continue to be so whatever government obtains in the rest of 'Iraq. A strong central government is abhorrent to a priesthood whose ambition it is to establish their authority as final in temporal as well as in spiritual affairs. The attitude of the Shiahs will be noticed in the course of this work.

#### AGRICULTURE.

The most important occupation in 'Iraq is agriculture.



The winter crops are wheat and barley - barley predominant in the Baghdad and Basrah areas, and wheat in the Mosul area, where large flocks of sheep are raised, their wool and skins being important articles of export. In the north the winter crops depend on the rain, but in the south, where the rainfall is less than seven inches, no crops are grown, except occasionally a scanty "catch crop", without assistance from irrigation.

For summer crops, even in the north, irrigation is required. The chief summer crop is rice, which is grown in the marsh lands of the middle and lower reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates. Most of this is red rice for home consumption. Millet also is grown and a little maize. The date is a very important product. From Fao to Qurnah, a distance of about one hundred miles, there is an almost continuous grove of date palms on each side of the river; but every town as far north as Samarra on the Tigris and 'Anah on the Euphrates has its date groves.

Two concessions have been granted by the 'Iraq Government, one in connection with oil and the other in connection with irrigation and cotton-growing projects. At present cotton cultivation on some six hundred acres of land previously irrigated is being carried on, and considerable interest has been shown in the possibilities of cotton growing on a large scale. The cultivation is



still in its experimental stages, but sufficient is known to justify reasonably high hopes for the future, always supposing the political conditions are satisfactory, and that great irrigation works costing large sums of money are carried out.

If the Asfar Conversion - Diala Irrigation Scheme is carried out 2,000,000 acres between Jebel Hamrin and the Kut district will be irrigated and made fit for cultivation. The land thus irrigated would include 500,000 acres under cotton, 500,000 acres under wheat, and 500,000 acres under barley, while the remainder would be devoted to the growing of fruits and vegetables.

#### INDUSTRIES.

The industries of 'Iraq which are for the local market only, include dyeing, tanning, leather-work, silk spinning, and weaving. The large towns, especially Baghdad, live on the distributing trade of 'Iraq and Persia.

#### LANGUAGE.

In the main the Arabic language is spoken. There are considerable variations in vocabulary and pronunciation. Everywhere there is found an admixture of Turkish, Persian, and, in the south, some English words.

#### MINERALS.

There are very few minerals in 'Iraq. Oil is found



in small quantities at Qayyarah, fifty miles south of Mosul on the Tigris, and there is an important deposit of bitumen and oil at Hit on the Euphrates. It is anticipated that much good will accrue from the Oil Concession to the Turkish Petroleum Company. The preliminary prospecting has been delayed by the enquiry into the northern frontier of 'Iraq: there is little doubt that an unfavourable decision on this question would mean great financial loss in the future to the state of 'Iraq. High hopes are entertained that oil will be found in considerable quantities, and, should reasonable development be made possible and the construction of the projected pipe line to the Mediterranean be carried out, optimism is justified. At present, however, it would appear that the oil fields of the country have yet to justify all that has been prophesied about their wealth<sup>1</sup>. If the country proves to be an important oil-bearing region, there will be a complete upheaval in its economic conditions. A considerable amount of labour will be required for working the wells, and the quantity of food raised will have to be considerably increased; in that case the cereals and mutton now partly exported will all be required for home consumption, and the farmers and shepherds would enter upon a hitherto unparalleled era of prosperity. There is salt in various places, and good clay for bricks is found in parts.

<sup>1</sup> League of Nations Report - p.68



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

A chequered history.

The independent States: Babylonia and Assyria.

Subjection; the Persians and Cyrus the Great;  
The Parthians; The Sasanids.

The Moslem Conquest - The Abbasid Dynasty.

Mongol Invasion - Hulaku; eighty years of Mongol  
rule; seventy years a vassal State.

The Turkomans.

A Kingdom of Safawi Persia.

Fifteenth Century; a home of heterogeneous peoples.

Sixteenth Century; expansion of Ottoman Empire.

Conquest of 'Iraq by Sulaiman the Magnificent.

Seventeenth Century; brief period of re-occupation  
by Persians.

Turks return under Sultan Murad IV.

European interests - Portuguese, British and Dutch.

Eighteenth Century - appearance of Wahhabis.

Nineteenth Century - Janissaries disappear.

Status of European Powers improved; the end of the  
Mamluks; the appearance of Midhat Pasha.

The British position.

Twentieth Century; Great War, 1914

(Military occupation.  
(Interim 1918-1920.  
(Rebellion, 1920.

'Iraq Provisional Government.



The country now called 'Iraq has had an extremely chequered history throughout the centuries. In ancient times it was the theatre of struggles between the Empires of the Medes and the Persians, and then between the Persians and the Greeks. It was in the plains between Mosul and Arbil that Alexander the Great won his decisive victory over Darius. We know that Alexander's Empire was, at his death, divided up among his Generals. The Seleucids reigned over the country until they were replaced by the Parthian Dynasty of the Arsacids. Subsequently, during the struggles between Rome and the Sasanians, the inhabitants of the plains, who were the descendants of the ancient Assyrians, of Armenians, and of Persian immigrants, sided sometimes with the one and sometimes with the other party.

The history of 'Iraq falls into two clear divisions; first the period when it contained great independent states; secondly the period of its subjection to a succession of the great military powers, Persian, Greek, Parthian, Sasanian, Arab and Turk. The first period dates from the dawn of history to 539 B.C., when Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon; the second continued until 1914.

The early history of 'Iraq is that of Babylon and Assyria, and of these the former was incomparably the



more important. Babylon must have contained over a million inhabitants, and it maintained its greatness under Alexander the Great until his death in 323 B.C.

The Persians, who took possession of Babylonia under Cyrus the Great preserved the ancient system of irrigation which was the life blood of 'Iraq.

The Seleucids held sway from 312 B.C. to 137 B.C., and later Ctesiphon was established opposite Seleucia on the left bank of the Tigris under the Parthian Dynasty.

In A.D. 226 the Parthian gave way to the Persian Dynasty of the Sasanids, who held 'Iraq until the Moslem conquest in A.D. 642. The country was in a prosperous condition when conquered, but either through wilful destruction or lack of necessary attention, deterioration set in and steadily reduced the state to insignificance. The qualities of the Arab nation, which have not altered materially, may be gathered from the following extract concerning the later Abbasids:-

"Al-Fakhri, pp. 132-133 (Egypt Ed.) - pp. 201 & 202 Derenbourg."

"Know that the 'Abbasid Dynasty was a treacherous, wily and faithless dynasty, wherein intrigue and guile played a greater part than strength and energy, particularly in its latter days. Indeed the latter rulers of this House lost all faculty of energy and courage, and relied solely on tricks and stratagems.



To this effect speaks the poet Ibn Kushajim,  
alluding to the truce observed by the people of  
the sword and the hostility and enmity of the  
people of the pen one to another:-

"Pleasant to the people of the sword be that  
idleness

Whereby their days are passed in self-indulgence!  
How many a man is there amongst them who lives  
a tranquil life and has never stirred forth  
To any war, nor ever attacked a resolute and  
equal adversary!

Evening and morning he struts about girding to  
his sword belt

A sword secure from serious work, which has never  
risked fracture.

But as for the people of the pen, at no moment  
are their swords dry of blood."

"In the same strain sang a certain poet when al-  
Mutawakkil slew his minister Muhammad b. 'Abdu'l-  
Malik az-Zayyat:-

"The heart was like to leave me for distress  
When it was said "The Wazir is slain!"

O Commander of the Faithful, thou hast slain one  
Who was the axle on which your mill revolved!

Gently, O sons of al-'Abbas, gently! "



For in truth men's hearts burn at your treachery! "

"Yet withal it was a dynasty abounding in good qualities, richly endowed with generous attributes, wherein the wares of Science found a ready sale, the merchandise of culture was in great demand, the observances of Religion were respected, charitable bequests flowed freely, the world was prosperous, the Holy Shrines were well cared for and the frontiers were bravely kept. Nor did this state of things cease until its last days were at hand, and violence became general, government was disturbed, and empire passed from them, all of which will be set forth in its proper place, if God please."

The downward course of the country now commenced in spite of the brilliance of the Abbasid Dynasty, for in the decade 830 to 840<sup>A.D.</sup> Turkish mercenaries began to play an important part in the Empire. In the Tenth Century the authority of the Abbasid Khalifahs did not extend beyond the limits of the town of Baghdad, and the Khalifahs themselves were at the mercy of their Generals - mercenaries who founded dynasties of their own<sup>1</sup>.

The province was still productive and, possessed of its corn-lands and its gardens, continued to be fruitful;

<sup>1</sup> Arnold - The Caliphate, p.57.



Baghdad still remained the city of the Khalifahs, but through the Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Centuries the Commander of the Faithful was a mere puppet in the hands of his Governors and guards; the wide Empire of Harun shrank to a single province; the Khalifahs, chastised or tolerated by their overlords, intrigued with remote Mongol princes against Muslim neighbours and feebly held the countless watercourses.

The three centuries from the fall of Baghdad in 1258 A.D. to the Mongols under Hulagu, down to the conquest by the Turks under Sulaiman the Magnificent, may suitably be considered in four periods<sup>1</sup>. For eighty years Baghdad was governed by the Mongol Sultans of Iran; for the succeeding seventy years it was a vassal state; In A.D. 1410 it fell into the hands of a half-tribal dynasty of Turkomans; in A.D. 1508 it was absorbed into the growing Kingdom of Safawi Persia. Through these centuries the country sank into tribalism, insecurity, and dependence.

The Fifteenth Century found 'Iraq, as now, the home of heterogeneous peoples - Persians domiciled in the Holy Cities; Indians and Negroes at Basrah; Sabaeans in the south, Kurds, Turks, Christians and Jews in Mosul and Baghdad. The fierce Yazidis lived to the north-east of Mosul; there were war-like aggressors in the Kirkuk area,

<sup>1</sup> Longrigg, p.12.

"Four Centuries of Modern 'Iraq"



and the Lurs of the Pusht-i-Kuh; on the west the pure Bedouin Arabs scorned the degeneracy of the settled members of their race.

Early Sixteenth Century found 'Iraq desolate, maimed and despoiled: a sharp and depressing contrast with the populous wealth of Abbasid times. The eastern expansion of the Ottoman Empire coincided with the rise of a powerful Persia, and the activities of the rival parties, fanned by religious differences, led to the overthrow of the Persians by the Turks under Sulaiman in A.D. 1534.

'Iraq was now a frontier province of the Turkish Empire; throughout the whole of the sixteenth century the struggle with Persia affected adversely the fortunes of the country, opposed as it was to the conflicting sects of Islam. There were changes; a new bureaucracy, the Turkish garrison, feudal tenancy, and Sunni divines; but still nine-tenths of the country, comprising the tribal elements, enjoyed a lawless freedom; they continued their habitual scorn of their foreign rulers. An attempt at subordination in the south led to a temporary pacification.

Following a series of painful events, the Persians re-occupied Baghdad in A.D. 1623; insecurity in Central 'Iraq and the desert still prevailed. A time of general uneasiness was followed by a terrible slaughter on the return to possession of the Turks under Sultan Murad IV in



1638, after fifteen years of Persian occupation. The seventeenth century was a dull epoch, confirming the inability of the Turks satisfactorily to govern the province; the essential principles of successful government were lacking; the tribes were still lawless. The Pashas who were appointed by the Sultan to rule were supported by forces of Janissaries; during the latter part of the century these were estimated at 13,000 horse<sup>1</sup>: the "permanent peace" with Persia, signed in 1639, operated for the subsequent eighty years. In the Persian Gulf Portuguese interests had risen and declined during the sixteenth century; the British appeared in the Gulf early in the next century through the activities of the first East India Company; further European rivals appeared in this area with the advent of the Dutch at the opening of the same century, and, later on, the French interests were seen in the formation of the French East India Company<sup>2</sup>. After a decade of internal strife, the country was in a miserable condition at the close of the century.

Although the eighteenth century was marked by the individual success of Sulaiman Abu Lailah, the safeguard of the Turkish Government lay in internal antagonism arising

<sup>1</sup> Rycaut - History of the Turks - Vol. III.

<sup>2</sup> Coke - The Heart of the Middle East, pp.105-110.



from religious divisions; weak and despotic as it was, it could not have endured without this potent influence<sup>1</sup>. The appearance of the fanatical Wahhabis in 1775 constituted a new problem.

Tribal unrest continued to be the main feature in the course of events during the nineteenth century; the Wahhabi menace continued and developed; the imperial character of the Janissaries which had changed towards the end of the previous century now disappeared entirely. European consuls appeared and foreign trade developed considerably. The departure of Daud Pasha in the second quarter of the century led to a new era in the government of 'Iraq, which, from 1831, under Ali Ridha Pasha, became a province of modern Turkey<sup>2</sup>.

The main policy of the internal administration of 'Iraq in this period was the suppression of every kind of influence that competed with the authority of the Porte. Until 1834 the government of the province rested with the Pasha; the Sultan was regarded rather in the light of suzerain than of ruler, and his authority in 'Iraq was constantly defied. In 1834, however, attempts were made to centralize the administration of the empire, and to

<sup>1</sup> Jones - Records of Bombay Government, 43 N.S., p.370.

<sup>2</sup> Longrigg, p.276.



substitute direct control by the Porte for the semi-independent rule of the Pashas. The latter were no longer to be selected from local families, but were dispatched to the province from Constantinople. The efforts of the Governors to fill the public purse by a stricter collection of the revenues aroused dissatisfaction among the Arabs, and rebellions were of frequent occurrence.

The marked changes in administration occurred during the tenure of Midhat Pasha, 1869-72, who, having re-organised the civil administration of the Turkish Empire in 1867, was sent to Baghdad as Wali in 1869 to introduce the Wilayet system of government.

Midhat Pasha<sup>1</sup> (1822-1884) was a Turkish statesman who took a prominent part in Turkish affairs in the latter half of the nineteenth century; after a period of successful administration in Rumelia, Bulgaria, and Nisch, he devised the system of wilayets (provinces), into twenty-eight of which the Ottoman Empire was subsequently divided administratively in 1864<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See "The Life of Midhat Pasha" - Midhat Bey, Ali Haydar, London, 1903.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbons - The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire, p.343.



Although Midhat met with further success as Governor of Baghdad, his work here was attended with much greater difficulties than had been experienced elsewhere. The successful administration of Midhat Pasha was characterised by a stern suppression of rebellions and by drastic reforms. The success of this Governor emphasised the importance of the need for good honest administration, rather than the exotic existence of good laws.

In the history of 'Iraq in the nineteenth century, Midhat Pasha stands out as an enlightened innovator. But although settlement and security were in some measure secured, the total achievement, so far as the tribes were concerned, was considerably to be minimised by subsequent events.

"The tribal policy of this period was similar in aim. "Of all the difficulties confronting its rulers, the tribes "were the head and front. The nature of this difficulty "has long since fully appeared. Still (throughout lower " 'Iraq) urged by their Mujtahids against the Turks, still "fundamentally opposed in interest to organised government, "asking nothing of the state which for ever pressed them "for taxes, preferring the tribal code to any court of "justice, completely conservative, so hungry as never to "miss a chance of gain, so wild and unmoral as to keep no "bargain, observe no compromise, still masters, returning



"unchanged after a hundred punishments, of road and  
 "river and all the country save narrow areas: their  
 "continuance in this form and scale was rightly seen  
 "by the Pashas of these years to be inconsistent with  
 "the existence of any government worth the name. The  
 "problem was of extreme difficulty. Three centuries  
 "of misrule had aggravated it. To the Turks, of all  
 "governing peoples, it would be the hardest to solve."<sup>1</sup>

The ravages of plague and flood, which the  
 administration was unable to combat, increased the  
 disorganisation and anarchy occasioned by the rebellious  
 tribes in 'Iraq. By 1834, consequent upon the aggressions  
 from Persia and the Wahhabis of Central Arabia, the culti-  
 vation had diminished so considerably that almost every  
 vestige of the ancient prosperity in the country had dis-  
 appeared. Increasing attention was directed towards  
 'Iraq both by the Central Government at the Porte and  
 by the Great Powers of Europe. This interest, however,  
 was aroused, less by the condition of the country, than  
 by its relations to questions of national importance, and  
 may be attributed chiefly to the changed attitude of the  
 Porte towards provincial administration, to the prominence  
 of the Turko-Persian boundary negotiations, and to the  
 development of British interest in the country, combined  
 with a growing connection between Mesopotamia and India,

<sup>1</sup> Longrigg, p.289.



which incited other powers to rivalry with Great Britain.

During the nineteenth century the British gradually built up for themselves a special position in the Persian Gulf and in Lower 'Iraq. Trade was developed in the Gulf, and the Tigris and Euphrates were opened up to navigation.

Survey work was carried out,<sup>1</sup> and an attempt made to suppress the slave trade and piracy. At the end of the century the British occupied a paramount position at Baghdad and held practically a monopoly of the navigation of the Tigris. In 1910 about 87 per cent. of the trade of the Persian Gulf was in British hands.

A great change, however, occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century, and as a result, our position at Baghdad was seriously challenged. The main factors which produced this situation were the building of the Baghdad railway, and the advent to power of the Young Turk party. The policy of this party in 1908 was markedly aggressive and inimical to British interests, and by intrigue, an attempt was made to influence adversely our relations with ruling Chiefs in the Gulf. These intrigues were coincident with the efforts of Germany to strengthen her commercial interests in that area. A change for the good took place in 1912, and at this time foreigners in general, and British in particular, were

<sup>1</sup> Jones op.cit.



treated with more consideration.

Incidentally the defeat of Turkey in the Balkans had weakened her power in Europe, and had also the effect of barring to Germany the direct road to Constantinople.

Mesopotamia was not apathetic to the Balkan defeat and there were risings in the Muntafiq and in Kurdistan. A direct result of the weakening of the central Turkish Government was the founding in Baghdad, in 1912, of a local branch of the Committee of Freedom and Accord, which was opposed to the Committee of Union and Progress. The anti-Turkish feeling was more particularly marked in Basrah, and disturbances took place resulting in the massacre of the Turkish Commandant of Troops by the Arabs, and these disturbances continued until 1914. The British interests in the Gulf are closely concerned with the regulation of the Gulf in general. The following words defining the British standpoint are quoted from a speech delivered by Viscount Morley (Acting Secretary of State for India) in the House of Lords on 2nd March, 1911:-

"If by any chance in negotiation our position  
 "in the Gulf is challenged this is the answer. That  
 "position has been described as unique. Great  
 "Britain has not sought territorial acquisition in  
 "these regions. She has for generations borne  
 "burdens there which no other nation has ever under-



"taken anywhere except in the capacity of Sovereign.  
"She has had duty thrust on her without dominion.  
"She has kept the peace amongst people who are not  
"her subjects; has patrolled during upwards of two  
"centuries waters over which she has enjoyed no  
"formal lordship. She has kept in strange ports  
"an open door, through which traders of every nation  
"may have as free access to distant markets as her  
"own. If Great Britain has become in any sense  
"arbiter and Guardian of the Gulf, it has not been  
"through any restless ambition urging her on to the  
"control of the waste places of the earth, but in  
"obedience to calls that have been made on her in  
"the past to enforce peace between erring tribes, to  
"give a free course to trade, and to hold back the  
"arm of the marauder. That is our charter. It  
"gives a time picture of our historical position.  
"It is owing to British enterprise, the expenditure  
"of British lives and treasure, that the Persian  
"Gulf is at this moment open to the navigation of  
"the world, and to this cause alone it may be said  
"that the seaborne trade of these regions owes its  
"very existence."

In 1914, when war broke out, the British and Turkish Governments were on the point of signing an agreement



settling all the disputed points regarding the status of Kuwait, the Baghdad railway, and the navigation of the Shatt-al-'Arab.

Since the Turks were driven from 'Iraq there have been three distinct stages in the administration of the country. Whilst military operations were in progress the control of the administration was in the hands of the G.O.C. H.M. Forces, and was carried out partly through Army Departments, such as those of Irrigation, Posts and Telegraphs, and Agriculture, and partly through political officers working directly under the Chief Political Officer, Sir Percy Cox. The second stage existed from the Armistice of 1918 to the Arab rebellion of 1920.

The rebellion of 1920 with, to an uninformed public, its inevitable suggestion of the futility of our work, was accidental and in no way a result of British policy. The long-delayed peace with Turkey and the activities of Bolshevics, Kemalists, and Turks on the borders of 'Iraq had caused disconcerting incidents which interrupted progress. The evident improvements in economic conditions had done much to counteract the efforts of this undesirable propaganda which is now happily on the wane. The culminating cause of the rebellion was the withdrawal of British troops in 1919 in response to popular clamour at home; the mujtahids,<sup>1</sup> realising the favourable circumstances

Coke -

<sup>1</sup> See "The Heart of the Middle East", p.176.



preached open revolt against the civil authority which unfortunately, in 1920, aroused the more fanatical sections of the Arabs to action. The Arab, whether Shiah or Sunni, is not usually submissive to the orders of his religious advisers when they step beyond their religious rôle, and the 'Iraq tribes in particular have not forgotten the disastrous consequences of this rebellion.

The withdrawal nullified the only efforts towards Arab progress since the declining civilisation which began with the fall of Baghdad in 1258.

During the period 1918-1920 the civil administration was rapidly organised by Sir A.T. Wilson. Whole Departments were taken over from the Army and adapted to meet the needs of the civil community. The Military Government which had administered from the Occupation ended in October, 1920; from November, 1920, the 'Iraq Provisional Government and Council of State was set up under the guidance of Sir Percy Cox, comprising -

President of Council	-	The Naqib of Baghdad
Ministry of Interior	-	Arab
Minister of Finance	-	Jew
Minister of Justice	-	'Alim
Minister of Defence	-	A soldier of the Arab Hijaz forces
Minister of Public Works	-	ex-Turkish General of Kirkuk origin
Minister of Education and Public Health	-	A Shiah of Kerbala
Minister of Commerce	-	Citizen of Basrah
Minister Auqaf	-	Citizen of Mosul
Nine Ministers without portfolios.		



The Mayor of Baghdad, two paramount shaikhs, of Shiah tribal confederations, Christians from Mosul and Muslims from Baghdad, Baghdad, and Basrah (one Shiah) were all elected, whilst later two more Shiahs (one a tribal shaikh, one a citizen of Amarah and a member of a Sa'dun family) were added. These men represented the various interests and communities of the people, and the Provisional Council thus constituted, governed the country until the election of the Emir Faisul in 1921. During their year of office the Council considered certain important questions: electoral law, an army for 'Iraq, and the formation of civil government under Arab officials. A scheme was formed later making political divisions as follows:-

10 -- Liwas<sup>1</sup>  
 35 -- Qadhas.  
 87 -- Nahdiyyahs.

The divisions follow closely the lines of the former Turkish organisation. The revised electoral law was set up and put into operation. After a referendum the Emir was elected in August, 1921, as King of 'Iraq. Thus the ancient city of Baghdad once again became the seat of an Arab kingdom, and under the new régime, the Emir's audience chamber became a centre of national consciousness. On October 22nd, 1922, the Anglo-'Iraq Treaty was signed.

The past few years, and in particular the last four years, have been all-important in the modern history of

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Report, 1925, p.7, gives details of subsequent change to 14 Liwas.



'Iraq. While the whole situation is full of possibilities, one must be prepared for relapses on the part of the Arabs. An administration, organised and bolstered by military occupation was effective, and on the whole met with a fair measure of success in different parts of the country. The election of the Emir was sound policy, since kingship is an indispensable stage in national development: with the Arabs in particular, the idea of personal leadership is fundamental.

With the retirement in 1923 of Sir Percy Cox, who had been the moving spirit in all matters concerning the Arabs in 'Iraq up to that time, the more experimental stages were brought to a close. The withdrawal from 'Iraq of one who, from the outbreak of the war with Turkey had followed, and, for the greater part of nine years, had guided the fortunes of the country, was the occasion of spontaneous demonstrations of affection and regret. Almost five years elapsed after the Armistice before peace with Turkey was actually signed. The long delay had many adverse effects on the political and commercial situation in 'Iraq. When certain frontier questions, particularly in the Mosul area, are settled, it will be possible to make more rapid advance in the settlement of affairs.

The organisation of the Air Force to carry out the



general policing work is a great advantage at this stage. The restlessness on the northern frontier has been considerably minimised by the display of force which has been made possible through the substitution of aeroplanes for other arms of the Service.

The uncertainty of tribal affairs in Central Arabia and the difficulties existing between Ibn Rashid, Ibn Sa'ud and the Sherif of Mecca are always disconcerting to the Authorities at Baghdad. At the present time there is a member of the House of Mecca on the throne at Baghdad, and a Treaty has been made defining relations with Ibn Sa'ud, who at present is the chief ruler in Central Arabia and is at present in occupation of Mecca. This settlement has also led to another important event - the re-opening of the Trade Route to Syria. Bolshevic propaganda, though rife during the past few years, no longer threatens 'Iraq to any serious degree. In Baghdad strenuous efforts have been made to balance the Budget<sup>1</sup>; this is of utmost importance in view of the fact that no outside persons, however interested and anxious to assist in the development of the country, can feel justified in raising capital for work in an unsettled country. The interest which certain British firms have in commerce demands that we must always

<sup>1</sup> The financial result for the year 1925 was a surplus of Rs 3,62,058 - 'Iraq Report for 1925, p.87.



have British representatives in Basrah, Baghdad, and Mosul. There are at present three main railway lines<sup>1</sup>; a metre gauge line runs from Basrah to Hillah and on to Baghdad, with branches from Ur to Nasiriyah and Mufraq, to Hindiyyah Barrage, and to Kerbala; a standard gauge line runs from Baghdad to Shergat near Mosul, and a metre gauge line from Baghdad to Khaniqin, near the Persian frontier, with a branch from Karghan to Kifri. These railways were constructed for tactical reasons and do not follow the usual caravan routes of the country. Before the construction of the railway, there was always a question as to how the rivers Tigris and Euphrates could best be utilised, the conflicting needs being irrigation and navigation. The railway runs through the Euphrates valley, a route which has a particular advantage because it passes through the part of the country best adapted for the production of wheat, barley, dates, and rice; and this too is the potential cotton growing area.

There has been continued agitation in the British press demanding our evacuation of 'Iraq, but to repeat what has been re-iterated by a succession of British statesmen, "owing to our promised pledges to the Arabs we are unable to quit the country and abandon our res-

<sup>1</sup> Present mileage is approx. 780 miles.



possibilities". We promised the Arabs "freedom and emancipation from Ottoman rule", and, as a late Prime Minister has stated, "no question of oil has dictated our policy". There is no doubt a consensus of opinion in favour of this evacuation by the British, but this must be carried out with prudence and foresight. Our annual expenditure on the country has been reduced from £20,000,000 to the comparatively insignificant sum of £3,000,000<sup>1</sup>. The crowning of Faisul as King of 'Iraq, and the setting up thereby of a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy has not only assisted the cause of the Arabs in 'Iraq, but has also fulfilled the promises which we made on account of the war services of King Husain and his family to the Allied cause. Whatever may be done in the interests of the country, there must eventually be a peaceful and lasting settlement with Turkey. The interest in Ottoman and Middle East affairs which was being shown by several countries, Germany in particular, before 1914, should make more cautious those who clamour for evacuation. Surely any interests in this area which are capable of furthering German aspirations in the Orient ought not to be lightly considered by us.

It might be useful, at this point, to summarise the position, emphasizing those points which are relevant.

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Administration Report for 1925, p.12.



In the past Arab intellect has shown itself particularly responsive to external influences. Although from the Turk it gained little, it learned much from Persia, Greek literature, Rome, Byzantium, and Eastern Christianity. Roman influence may be seen at Palmyra; the Byzantine influence may be seen in the administration of the Umayyads. The Sasanian influences were clearly marked in the foundation of Baghdad, just as the Moorish culture was indelibly stamped on Cordova; and so we find that the wastes of 'Iraq and the Syrian desert are strewn with the remains of their imposing temples, palaces, monumental tombs, and castles. In the deserts too, and on their confines, we find the ruins of the race, some still purely nomadic, some semi-nomadic, and the others forced into humble tillage of the soil. Moslem civilisation had reached its zenith during the Abbasid dynasty, a dynasty which flourished under foreign guidance. In the golden age of the Abbasids the Arabs received their scientific impulse from Hellenistic culture. Greek books were preserved by Nestorian Christians, and the seeds of literary culture were left in Persia by the refugees from the schools of Athens, when these last strongholds of pre-Christian thought were broken up.



The period with which this study is mainly concerned, commenced with the Moslem conquest; later 'Iraq was captured by the greatest of Ottoman Sultans from the formidable Persia of the early Safawis. A century of Turkish rule followed: ill-recorded, it savours of treachery and violence. A brief interlude of Persian dominion was followed by an historic day of re-conquest by the Turks. Sixty years of uneventful government was succeeded by a period of over a century, when 'Iraq was detached from the Empire and governed by local rulers, whose fall was followed by seventy years, during which 'Iraq was again a province of the Ottoman Empire. The type of administration which followed was no less wild or ignorant, and no less corrupt than its predecessors; the country entered the nineteenth as it had left the sixteenth century, with its resources untouched, its potentialities still dormant.

The history of these centuries is dull reading. From time to time only it is relieved by the story of an unusually violent or an excessively indolent Pasha who, during a brief tenure of office, was either more cruel or a little more sympathetic than the rest, and earned, as the case may be, the hatred or goodwill of his subjects respectively. A life, or a number of lives, was of little moment; the Pasha would, whenever possible, wreak



vengeance on his Empire's enemies or refractory subjects in the most cold-blooded manner, until Nemesis finally overtook him. A dispatch to the Sultan would be rendered more realistic by the accompanying head of a tyrant; local activities would occasionally be relieved by a new method of execution; now the prisoners were suspended from the city walls with heads downward; on another occasion the victims were chained and put into boats which, after they had been filled with combustible material, were floated, fired, and the unfortunate ones burned alive; or again a son would be beheaded in his mother's arms. On the other hand debauchery and excess countenanced by a pleasure-loving ruler would serve to keep fashionable another type of rule.

The common characteristics of Turkish administration are misrule and neglect; the motive in the government of the country was, in short, the rule of the subjects for the glory and benefit of the ruler. In the application of this belief the Turks were at least consistent.

The population of 'Iraq, although Arab in the main, comprises different races and creeds, and its culture for the past five hundred years has been alien. The people exhibit widely divergent stages of evolution, economically and socially. For centuries the Arabs have not been masters in their own land, for Turkish domination has



robbed them of their territorial birthright, and atrophied their power of self-government. The baneful effect of Turkish misrule has contributed not a little to the present low state of civilisation amongst the race. The province was under the sovereignty of the Ottoman Sultans during the past four centuries, but this sovereignty was effective neither over the whole territory nor at all periods. The Pashas were sometimes very independent, while the tribes were scarcely ever reduced to subjection. Only in the towns was the authority of the Sultan more or less enforced.

We will now proceed to an examination of the questions involved in this work, and see what effect these conditions had upon the lives of the inhabitants.

Iraq compared with 18th century Scotland.

Iraq and South Africa - some resemblances.

The Arab at peace - Arab women.

Real need of security of tenure and freedom from attack.

Activities in recent years - present features and

resources - need for irrigation.

The date industry.

Tourist traffic - archaeological interests.

The British occupation - and progress.



## EXPOSITION OF SOME OF THE QUESTIONS INVOLVED

Destruction of old canal system - land and water -  
potentialities of the country - need for a pro-  
gressive Land Policy.

A discredited revenue policy.

Shortage of labour.

Methods of cultivation.

'Iraq Budget and possibility of loans.

A thorny problem - the religious difficulty.

Social aspects - classes of Arabs - the tribal Arab -  
ghazu and feud.

'Iraq compared with 18th century Scotland.

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Tourist traffic - archaeological interests.

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Mesopotamia has seen the rise and decay of a succession of Empires, but the economic facts which largely governed the situation in the past are in operation to-day. The decay of the past five hundred years has been due to political dissension, both internal and external, with a consequent loss of power and a lack of effective government. The failure to control the canals has led to a loss of untold wealth. The land and water are still there as in past ages, but the problem of the development of the present resources, although perhaps no greater than in the past, needs the help of modern science. Gradually the Arabs themselves are coming to realise the natural potentialities, and those who know the country and its people have great faith in their early development.

This development can only take place if the Government adopts and maintains a progressive Land Policy. Many factors will determine the rate of progress, but chief amongst these will be the Government's attitude. The fertility of the soil is unquestioned, and there is water in large quantities. The economic pressure which is common throughout most countries at the present time should make it possible for 'Iraq to take advantage of her resources.



The obsolete and discredited revenue policy of the Turks is still in the main continued, an unenviable heritage which must be revised, if not destroyed. Its effect is that, although the cultivators pay considerable amounts either in cash or in kind, yet the Treasury receives a comparatively small total. It is realised that in the past much of the leakage has been due to the dishonesty of Revenue and other Ottoman officials. There are, however, others who have shared, such as the Mallaks, or land owners, and the Sirkals, or farmers. Wherever one goes in the country, some new complication of the system is found, and it is, as it has been in the past, to the interest of those who control these areas to maintain as long as possible their own peculiar relationships with the cultivators. There are districts in which, on the canals, many old customs are still in vogue, and any suggested variation comes almost as a revolution.

The large areas of land which cannot be developed because of the shortage of labour present another and larger difficulty. Individual owners are limited in the amount of land they can undertake to cultivate and control, so that it is the business of the Government to devise some scheme which will allow of the



extending of the area under cultivation. Whether the formation of land companies, under native or alien control, or a mixture of both, will be possible, or whether, with the assistance of modern machinery and scientific knowledge, it will be possible to meet the shortage of labour and extend cultivation - these are questions which only time and thought will solve. Any scheme which would reduce the number of revenue collectors and simplify the system of revenue assessment and collection is highly to be desired. If the Arab owners and cultivators could expect, in return for their contributions to the State, public security and sympathetic consideration in matters of irrigation and scientific guidance, together with improved communications, then it is believed they would settle more and more to their efforts at development.

In 'Iraq there is still a belief in many primitive methods of cultivation, but many Arabs have already realised what scientific agriculture means. The penetration of the newer ideas must of course take time, but concentration on engines of construction rather than of destruction is a vital necessity if the country is to be developed.

'Iraq is still encompassed by ruthless and



inexorable enemies. A crowd of malcontents stir up strife internally and make progress difficult, so that there has been a state of depression affecting all activities. The country should be a valuable outlet for our manufactures, and when the present Government under Faisul can produce a satisfactory Budget-balance, it will be in a better position to obtain loans for carrying out its irrigation projects, the construction of barrages, regulators, and canals. Although we were perhaps inadvisedly led to our occupation of the country, yet our efforts at least include valuable experiments which cannot be abandoned without loss to all concerned.

It is often urged that the religious differences between English and Arabs are too great for the success of our efforts to assist this foreign race, but history on all sides disproves this. We have before us the history of the administration in India, the Sudan, Egypt, and parts of Africa, where difficulties due to religion have not been insurmountable. Internecine strife in 'Iraq due to whatever cause is, however, a more serious difficulty. Any careful examination of the Wahhabite organisation in the past hundred and fifty years, especially the recent Ikhwan



effort at revival in an intensified form, will show how Arabs can create conditions which promote disintegration and engender strife. The followers of Ibn Sa'ud are uncompromisingly dogmatic and puritanical. Their Shiah brethren they frankly condemn as infidels, yet their venom they reserve for the orthodox Sunni churches<sup>1</sup>. The fanaticism of the desert folk cannot be over-estimated, and goes to show how essential it is to consider the nomad Arab apart<sup>2</sup>.

It would be a mistake to characterise Islam as an enemy to economic development. It has in its time, so adapted itself to various conditions that one feels assured in the hope that it may also adapt itself to the economic advancement of the modern world. The modernising of the East demands not the suppression of Islam but the higher development of Oriental general education. Islam as a form of religion is without doubt one which could be developed: it will depend upon the ability of the

<sup>1</sup> H. St. J. B. Philby "Heart of Arabia" - Vol. I, p.61: also see 'Iraq Report for 1925, p.25 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> See 'Iraq Report, 1925, pp. 49-51 for recent Ikhwan activities.



people of Islam to show that they are as capable of development as their religion<sup>1</sup>.

On the whole Arab historians have not devoted much attention to the social side of life in their writings. In an age when a renewed interest has been quickened in the great Arab civilisation of the past, it may not be out of place to give some account of the present day people, the more so since their national position is in a state of flux, emerging it is hoped, from that decadent state in which they have lived for some hundreds of years. Although it may be argued that the Arab, and especially the nomad, has scarcely changed his ways in the past three thousand years, yet it will be shown that recent times have seen great changes amongst the inhabitants of 'Iraq, politically, socially, and economically.

Traditions assign a place only to the nomadic and to the settled, but observation shows that a considerable number are in a state of transition from the nomadic to the settled. The town dwellers and even the riverain Arabs are, on the whole, peace-loving: they do not demand the Administrator's chief attention, and their social development is a com-

<sup>1</sup> Becker -  
"Islamstudien" p.65.



paratively simple problem, once we have traced their change of condition from the original nomadic to the settled state. As distinct from the great Bedouin tribes, there are independent tribes, such as the Shammār, who wander over northern 'Iraq; the Anizah, who spread over to Syria; and the Dhafir, who are generally bordering on the Muntafiq territory, and are a terror to the authorities and the more settled population. In various ways, chiefly by money subsidies, a fair peace is irregularly maintained: on occasion such tribes were invited by the Turks to fall upon smaller rebellious tribes, and besides bloodshed, universal wreck was the result, since friends and foes were visited indiscriminately. The more settled tribes hasten to get out of their way, and so quick are Bedouin movements that they succeed only in escaping from them with their families. Flocks, tents, household furniture, crops, and kine, are abandoned and fall into Bedouin hands, to be transported and sold at prices however low to anyone who will meet them in ready exchange. Plunder being their only object, they care not to pursue the proprietors, for they have no real sympathy with the Government in these affairs. Raiding (ghazu) forms an indispensable part of the desert Arab's life.



Generally speaking, the form of Ottoman administration was based on that of Constantinople; local variations were adopted only where no serious violation of the general law was necessary. Nefarious practices in perversion of law and right varied very little. The lack of capacity to organise is one of the chief characteristics of the East<sup>1</sup>. This factor was everywhere noticeable in the Ottoman administration of 'Iraq. Although there is a diversity of people inhabiting 'Iraq, the larger and more important elements politically are the tribes who are now more or less settled, having come in at different periods from the Arabian Desert. All these people, originally nomads, now in and around 'Iraq, are either semi-nomadic or quite settled. People of other creeds and nationalities are to be found in the towns, but the immemorial differences still exist between the townspeople and the tribal elements, the former being anxious for the security of their own lives and possessions, and generally wishing to be protected from the depredations of the tribesmen.

The chief difficulty for the administrator is provided, and has been for many years, by the roaming Arab section. While the people with whom this work

<sup>1</sup> C. H. Becker - Islamstudien, p.60.



is primarily concerned are either semi-nomadic or settled, the nomadic section beyond the geographical limits of 'Iraq must be considered, since they have had and continue to have a considerable influence on the course of events. The nomadic Arabs are always ready to take advantage of their weaker brethren, the town-settled and partly settled riverain Arabs. The cold contempt of the former for the latter, and the fear of the latter for the former, constitute a real difficulty in any attempt at organised government. Notwithstanding what may be termed the puritanism of the Wahhabis there is much of the materialist in the nomadic Arab, who will not allow religious scruples to interfere with the practical results of his raiding. This fact must not be lost sight of in the romantic atmosphere through which we are so easily led to regard picturesque bandits whose virtues appeal to us more than their vices repel. The Arab does not discriminate in his attacks on outside people; foreign soldiery, European travellers, or Moslems bent on trade or pilgrimage: all may be raided. There may be a neighbouring tribe<sup>1</sup> with whom there has been from time immemorial a feud<sup>2</sup>: this provides sufficient justification

<sup>1</sup> Margoliouth - Early Development of  
Mohammedanism - p.56.

<sup>2</sup> See Qur'an xvii - 35.



for attack at any time. The peculiar feature of this fighting is that the Arab does not desire a decisive but a long drawn out contest. The fatalistic idea is prevalent: if Allah has willed that on a certain occasion there should be a bootless quest, then it is for the tribe to realise this and await a return of grace. If the addition of rifles or a subsidy from an interested outside party arrives at any time, then Allah has willed it so, and the help will improve the chances of success in future raids. The acquisition of a few rifles will often be a sufficient stimulus for a tribe to renew the active prosecution of a long-standing feud.

Essentially the tribal Arab is the foe of his fellow man, though he is not without a few redeeming qualities. He indulges in none of the vices of town life, and is generally averse from shedding blood except in retaliation for blood shed by others; and here he relies upon Qur'anic precept for his justification. Naturally this law of blood for blood should act as a deterrent, since all are aware of the consequences of murder; the tribal tension that follows the shedding of blood, and the restlessness and the strained life in a section, or in a whole tribe, are better realised on the spot than described in any account.



Tribal quarrels are so frequent that oft times a most trivial incident forms the basis of a quarrel. In one particular case in recent years two men of the same tribe were fishing, when one speared a fish which was claimed by the other; the basis of the claim was that the man had thrown in some form of poison higher up the river, and this fish, which appeared stupified on the surface, formed part of his catch; the general practice in this form of catching fish is to wait downstream, and as the fish appear, either to spear them from a canoe or to swim out and land them. Both men were following the same method and hence the difficulty arose. The altercation led to blows in which one man drew out his dagger and killed his fellow tribesman. Both sections of the tribe immediately fought, and over sixty members were killed. The value of the fish was less than the equivalent of one penny.

An interesting comparison might be made between the Scotland of the Stuart risings (1715, 1745) and 'Iraq in recent times. The Scots of that time were a very turbulent people made up of warring tribes who raided their enemies, burned houses on occasion, and were intermittently destructive. It was an age



of "the survival of the fittest". The clansmen of the Highlands were quite distinct from the town dwellers. In the interval Scotland has changed and she is now organised in the usual western manner. In 'Iraq we have the tribal organisations raiding and fighting on every conceivable occasion. The Arabs have continued now for several hundred years in a state at times approaching barbarism; but in spite of the backwardness of the country and the people, this barbarism ought not to be over-emphasised. A few centuries separate us from the time when Scots were blindly following the Church, when there were rival fighting clans, warring factions at Court who were capable of carrying out assassinations, when witches were burned, when there was a general ignorance of agriculture, plague was common, and starvation led to riots. In spite of his adoption, in the main, of the British system, the Scot has kept alive his love of freedom and maintained his individuality. The story of the Arab is not dissimilar. Throughout the centuries he has kept himself as distinct in his own world as the Scot in his. Both Scots and Arabs make friends with the world at large, and the Arab shares with the Scot a liking for independence.

There are, too, certain resemblances which might



be pointed out between 'Iraq and South Africa. Both countries have been ravaged by war, yet the turmoil has led to a certain amount of political freedom and new responsibilities. The London market was not won in a day for the fruit growers of South Africa, and great efforts will be necessary to provide a market for the produce of 'Iraq. The distance from the Arab producer to the possible consumer of his goods has now been shortened considerably, and it is possible to cross the desert from Baghdad to Damascus by motor transport in three days: the journey to England is accomplished in twelve days or even less.

When at peace the tribal Arab is mild, courteous and hospitable: he nevertheless has the natural gifts of cunning and treachery, the requisite accomplishments for his mode of life. He is too proud and ignorant to work, and dreams only of enriching himself by plundering others of the gifts which seem to him to be distributed by nature so that he should exercise his strength in obtaining them. We must use the Arabs' own maxim in dealing with this people - "Never take a man for a friend until you have proved him not to be an enemy".

In this age the position of Arab women is of



general interest. Arab women are exposed to constant hardships<sup>1</sup>. They are obliged to look after the children, to make the bread, to fetch water and to cut wood, which they bring home from afar on their heads. Moreover they are entrusted with all the domestic duties, and weave their wool and goats' hair into clothes, carpets, and tent canvas. If their husbands possess sheep or cows, they drive them to pasture. The men sit indolently smoking and gossiping. Many callous crimes occur annually in which women are the victims<sup>2</sup>.

It is hoped that with agricultural development and with a just and sympathetic administration, offering security of tenure and freedom from attack, the nomads will in time settle down, and, freed from need, will discontinue their troublesome raiding activities. It has appeared in recent years that what the already settled Arabs desire above all other things are security of tenure and freedom from attack. If only these two conditions of existence can be brought about and can be given a certain degree of permanence, then much will have been done towards establishing this Eastern race

<sup>1</sup> Layard, Nineveh - p.235, Edn. 1851.

<sup>2</sup> 'Iraq Report, 1925, p.152.



in its proper place amongst the nations of the world. Practical endeavour should be directed to the fanning into activity, and maintaining, the fire of local patriotism which, though deadened, has never been completely extinguished. In this land, as throughout the centuries, social order must be based on tribal loyalty.

Any consideration of this area pre-supposes a knowledge of the past; a well-wisher cannot but hope that the new phase may lead to the restoration of this once all-important centre of civilisation. The great alluvial plain has received in recent years an enormous amount of attention and thought. Specialists of all kinds have been at work in the country, devising schemes which will lead to its rejuvenation, and their recorded opinions testify to the potentialities of the country in many respects. The land in the past has been irrigated by free flowing water or by the use of lifts. In recent years pumps have been introduced. The soil is very fertile, but there are tremendous difficulties since the two rivers are very low during several months of the year, whilst at other times they are in flood and become raging torrents. The winters can be severe and the summers intensely hot for a prolonged period. Temperature varies during the year from 20°F. to 120°F.



in the shade. Wherever water reaches, there one finds life and prosperity. The tree indigenous to the country is the date palm, which is greatly prized and intensively cultivated by the Arabs. After the date, rice is the most valuable crop in the country at present, and it is desirable to stimulate its production. The marsh areas, caused by the flooding of the rivers, are eminently suitable for this purpose and might become of great economic value. The great irrigation works of antiquity have long since fallen into decay, and it is difficult to compare the glorious past with the 'Iraq of to-day.

'Iraq is essentially an Arab country, but there are marked influences other than Arab, such as that of the Kurdish tribes on the eastern frontier. This country is essentially the domain of the shepherd and the ploughman; there is, however, some mineral wealth in the bitumen of Hit on the Euphrates, and in the oil at Qayyarah on the Tigris. Along the streams there are rich belts of cultivation and to the north there are extensive arable tracts. The mineral possibilities are very large, and the extending of irrigation is possible over a vast range of land suitable for cereal crops and cotton.

'Iraq has many intrinsic qualities and material



resources, and in view of the marvellous progress in the last decade she is bound to advance. There are now good roads throughout the country suitable for motor traffic, and recent activities in this direction augur well for trade and civilisation. The creation of a sound municipal system on the one hand and the dying down of lawlessness and tribal rivalry on the other are the most important factors making for progress. The great mass of people in town and country want the opportunity of settling down under stable government in order to make a success of commerce and agriculture. This condition, involving as it does an extended system of irrigation and a fair amount of capital expenditure, can be accomplished with the friendly co-operation of Britain. The highest economic factor is not oil, but irrigation, and if the country obtains the restoration of her once famous system of water supply, then prosperity and security will be obtained, and the advantages of civilisation will follow as a matter of course. The fertility of the soil has been proved by the support given to the great Empires, age after age, from agriculture alone. It is difficult to imagine any other country where a people could rely on this one source of supply. The necessary irrigation works could be



carried out by degrees, and the whole face of the country would, in a comparatively short time, be altered.

'Iraq is the principal date-exporting country of the world. The greater part of the crop comes to the London market, whilst other parts find their way to America, India, and Australia. Liquorice is also exported, as well as a fair number of horses, and there is a large trade in hides and skins. Grain is now being sent out of the country: in the six months ending October, 1922, 41,000 tons, more than half of which came to London, were exported. The cotton position is considered hopeful enough to warrant the British Cotton-Growing Association maintaining a ginning plant at Baghdad. A start has been made in the cultivation of silk, and rice, though not of a good quality, is also exported. Tobacco is grown for cigarettes. The manufactures are only of local importance; some brasswork finds its way to Persia, whilst some articles of furniture, textiles, silks and carpets come to Europe and America. There is a fair amount of Sabaeen silver work which might be marketable abroad, but the source of the wealth of the country lies in agriculture, and there is little or no future for the manufactures. The total exports



for the six months ending September, 1922, amount to £3,000,000 value.

There is one other source of interest, namely the tourist traffic. Nowadays, Babylon, Nineveh, Ctesiphon, and Ur, are more than names to the world at large. The ruins of 'Iraq rival those of Egypt, and apart from the archaeological remains at these places, there are the interesting religious centres of Kadhimain, Samarra<sup>h</sup>, Baghdad, Najaf, and Kerbala. Although the climate in the summer is at times distinctly unpleasant, yet 'Iraq has an advantage over India inasmuch as the nights are always cool. On the average there are only two really oppressive nights throughout the summer season, when some amount of sleep is really impossible. The winter is, perhaps, the mildest in the world.

It is hoped in the course of this examination to show the lines upon which attempts have recently been and are still being made to guide the Arabs. For this purpose it will be necessary to trace the influence of the Ottoman administration, to see what attempts have been made under British influences, and to estimate their results so far as they can at present be judged. It must be realised that, for the period of the war, our efforts were subjected to



strict limitations, not only because there was war within 'Iraq itself, but also because it was uncertain whose duty it would be in the future to fulfil the rôle of guardian to the Arabs - if indeed events finally determined the necessity for any outside power to assume control. A survey of the facts will show that definite progress has been made, though since culture or civilisation, as developed by the different European nations, varies considerably in its nature, it is to be expected that British achievement will be judged variously according to the nationality of the critic.

Mesopotamia, or 'Iraq as it is now generally called, has suffered from much misdescription by sections of the British press. But pleasing features throughout a recent depressing period in the history of the country have been the integrity and whole-hearted efforts of British officials and experts in the country in recent years, and the interest in archaeological enterprises.

The stream of British gold has not been running in vain, and has not run to waste. Apart from the question of the position of 'Iraq in respect of



adjacent countries in which England has interests and commitments, the future of 'Iraq itself is certain to ensure the active interest of our country. The position of the Arabs themselves has been peculiar in recent years; they could be considered neither as conquerors nor conquered; they participated in the Great War on both sides, always enthusiastically active when assisting the temporarily ascendant forces. The whole question of success or failure depends on the ability of the present governing body to obtain fusion, and to produce a united people, imbued with a strong sense of loyalty to the central authority, which would thus transcend the present strong feeling of local patriotism. National feelings and aspirations were distinctly discouraged by the Turkish Authorities, who saw in them a menace to their own rule. The promotion of this ideal will call forth all the powers, not only of the British advisors, but also of the executive native officials whose duty it is to secure such a standard of national intelligence as will produce this wider loyalty and a centralisation of interests. The difficulties, however, are not confined to the inhabitants themselves, but extend to those whose influence reaches



the borders of 'Iraq, such as the Hijaz and the Central Arabian Chiefs, whose doings are closely followed by many of the Arabs, especially the Muntafiq confederation in the central and lower Euphrates. In the north there are the Kemalists; from north to north-west there are the Turks; and these people influence the political divisions of Kirkuk and Mosul. The Hillah division obtains its particular influence from the presence of the Shiah holy cities of Kerbala and Najaf, with their schools of divines and their predominantly Persian population. It will at once be realised that the duties of administration in these circumstances are by no means enviable.



## LAND TENURE

Early basis of taxation, pre-Islamic.

Muhammadian conquest - Khalifahs and Viziers.

Early Moslem taxation - under the Umayyads and Abbasids.

Methods of local governors.

The influence of the Seljuk Turks.

Fief system - the abuses from grants of State lands.

The introduction of feudalism by Seljuk Turks.

Theory and fact - incongruity in 'Iraq and India.

From Hulaku to Sulaiman Pasha.

A brief Persian re-occupation - a continuance of bad  
conditions.

Return of the Turks - an attempt at fixed assessments -  
a "Domesday Book".

The eighteenth century and the slave Pashas.

The nineteenth century - the change.

Midhat Pasha - the Tapu system.

Influence of Religious law.

Customary law.

Turkish Land Code - The Mujalla - The Turkish Civil Code -  
The judicial system in 'Iraq.

The present position.



S.O.S.  
LONDON

A survey of the system of land tenure and taxation of land from the earliest times reveals one constant feature. This is the inability of officials to carry out their duties without oppressing the people and misappropriating public funds to their own enrichment. In order fully to appreciate the subject of Land Tenure it will be necessary to review the earlier systems and to trace the administrative methods and system of taxation through the centuries to modern times.

The tablets of the Sumerian City, Tel-loh (Lagash) near the modern Shatrah have disclosed to us the constant internecine quarrels concerning boundaries of land at a time when fame was obtained by erecting temples to Gods or by digging canals. The land groaned under the oppression of its tithe and tax gatherers. The famous Code of Laws of Hammurabi deals, amongst other matters, with questions of farming, grazing, land watering, marriage, slavery, inheritance, and the protection of society. The form of land tenure with its feudal system is clearly set out, and we are supplied with detailed information regarding the administration of land matters.

An entertaining picture of the life of the



inhabitants in 2000 B.C., their social grades, their law courts, their rights in property and their everyday customs is drawn in a number of good works<sup>1</sup>. Three classes of society were reckoned, and it is amusing to see how the man of the lower middle class (mushkenu) has actually bequeathed his title to the French through Arabic, in the word 'mesquin'.

✕ Property was held either as a private possession, or as 'ilku', granted by the king by way of reward for services. Estates of orchards or corn lands were carefully surveyed (there is actually a tablet in existence which provides exercises in calculating irregular areas) and drained with canals.

The land laws of Babylon were strict and exacting<sup>2</sup>. We are told that a tenant could be punished for not cultivating his land properly. Rent was paid in proportion to the crop; the amount was fixed according to the average yield of a district. ✕ This method must have compelled the neglect-

<sup>1</sup> See L. Delaporte - Mesopotamia: The Babylonian and Assyrian Civilisation - 1925.

<sup>2</sup> Milne - Egypt under Roman rule.



ful cultivators to make at least some effort; an allowance was made for bad harvests.

Legislation was provided for the many problems which arose in connection with land cultivation, so that a man who was guilty of negligence in controlling the water supply was called upon to pay the losses to his neighbours' crops.

An interesting feature is that business transactions were recorded in clay tablets, Laws were made to deal with stray cattle and consequent damage to standing crops.

There would appear to have been three chief social grades: the most important of these was the aristocracy, consisting of land owners, high officials, and administrators; the second grade was made up of the freemen, among whom were many wealthy merchants and smaller land owners; and there was finally the slave class.

Now we must leave ancient Babylonia and allow ourselves to leap over many centuries into the Christian era.

~ We know how early Islam accepted unchanged the administrative organisation found in the acquired Byzantine and Sasanian territories; these lands formed part of the ideal world kingdom - the Dar-al-Islam.



In theory the landed proprietors living in village communities were responsible to the State for the rent of the land. The first Imams did not concern themselves with the detailed government of these lands but entrusted the work to the Generals. As the wealth of these possessions became apparent, the early anxiety for the application of the religious influence of Islam to the people was awakened.

As we have no contemporary evidence of these early systems, thanks mainly to the ruthless destruction of records by the Abbasides, we are led to be somewhat sceptical about the available evidence.

Although we have detailed information regarding Islamic and post Islamic times, we must remember that the accounts are found in works that are of late compilation. Abu Yusuf, the writer of Kitab al-Kharaj, lived in the reign of, and was chief Qadhi to, Harun - 786-809 A.D. In this work he shows that the State interest in lands was restricted to the payment of rent; property could be bestowed upon, but not transferred to, anyone else so long as the first vassal had heirs who could become responsible for its management; if the land lay fallow the right was forfeited. The State did not lease lands for short periods or for a lifetime. The leasing of taxes, which was the rule



for small districts and for single villages, is denounced by the writer as a pernicious system<sup>1</sup>. \*

Baladhuri, one of the earliest sources, lived 806-892 A.D; he gives us remarkable accounts of the victorious Muslims in the early Islamic centuries. The state of 'Iraq is described when first Islam became the dominant creed. A fuller survey, giving us the main source of knowledge of the principles of Muslim taxation, and showing the limits of the executive powers of Viziers and Governors of Provinces, is contained in the writings of Al Mawardi, 975-1058.

We must strongly emphasize the incongruity between theory and fact; in theory the Arabs lived under a system; in practice this system did not prevail. To arrive at any clear statement of such a complexity of systems which so obviously varied at different times is a matter which is not germane; but the following facts appear to be fairly well established.

\* Much of the land which was acquired by conquest appears to have been given to the principal companions of the Prophet. An important point in this connection is that payment of taxes gave a certain guarantee of security. The condition of affairs under the various

<sup>1</sup> Becker:  
Der Islam Bd V, Hft I, p.85.



Viziers is well set forth in various works<sup>1</sup>. A Vizier would generally hold office for a year or two, during which time he would succeed in acquiring millions of dinars in addition to estates and buildings. Bribery and extortion were the chief means he employed to the attainment of these, and after a short period in office he would either resign or be dismissed. A generally recognised perquisite of the Vizier was his right to appoint Governors. Whilst the Khalifahs were fully aware of this, they made no attempt to stop it. The result was that the Governors in turn plundered the property of the unfortunate subjects; they tampered with the proceeds of the taxes and illegally imposed customs. The land was full of spies, and the whole system of administration was distinctly unhealthy. The Governor's usual procedure in dealing with his subjects was to appropriate a portion of the cultivator's standing crops, if this method appealed to him, or to send his agents to obtain his share of the crops at the threshing floor. Some Governors even went so far as to take to themselves whole estates, and it was a common practice for persons of influence with the

<sup>1</sup> See A. v. Kremer - *Culturgeschichte*, and C. H. Becker - *Der Islam V.*



Khalifah to confiscate estates. A dispossessed landlord would often pay the land tax in order that his name should not disappear from the records.

In assessing taxes, the nearness to, or distance from, markets was taken into consideration, as well as the proximity to source of water supply. It is interesting to note that the Muslims of Sawad asked Mansur to take part of the produce as tax, and this scheme was eventually introduced. Mawardi and Ibn Tiktaka tell us of the system of land tenure by which the Kharaj was levied on the produce from one tenth to one half of the area and not on the whole area. This was known as Mukasamah. The Dhi'ra or cubit, the length of a man's arm with the hand and fingers stretched out, has apparently long been utilised, and is still retained, as a standard of measurement.

It is noted that in the earliest period of Moslem rule, taxation in theory and practice was carefully attended to, and a considerable revenue was obtained. As a general rule poor tax was payable on arable land, precious metals, and flocks (camels, sheep, and cattle). Eatables, especially corn and vegetables, were liable to taxation. The date and grape harvests were valued on a conjectural basis, and the standard of



land valuation was made according to the quality of the soil. The theory of Islam was, from the commencement, that the land conquered became the possession of the conquerors. The Prophet had ordered that all crops raised on land watered by nature or from natural springs were liable to "Ushr". This tithe was a common tax irrespective of the real rate of incidence; but all lands needing artificial irrigation were to pay half this amount<sup>1</sup>. "Ushr" was payable on barley, maize, wheat, peas, rice, millet, and sesame. There were state pastures, and in the time of Umar there were 400,000 camels and horses on the state pastures. The revenue from poor tax, which was collected in herds and in gold, was used for the equipment of soldiers for war against non-Muslims, the payment of officers in connection with the tax, and the support of needy Muslims.

The administrative methods of the Umayyads were copied from those of the previous Persian Government; the government of the Abbasids was also inspired by Persian methods: the provincial governors remind us of the former Satraps. Endowed with the most extensive powers, they administered the country and col-

<sup>1</sup> Qur'an 59:7



lected the taxes, by means of which they raised and maintained armies, paid the officials, provided for the construction and maintenance of public buildings, and sent any surplus there might be to the Khalifah. -

This system of administration had one advantage; it enabled each province to be given the sort of government best suited to its necessities and customs; but it had also a corresponding disadvantage inasmuch as it left too much independence to populations insufficiently penetrated by the Musulman ideal, and gave too much authority to Governors. The latter enriched themselves by scandalous exactions, and surrounded themselves with devoted followers. Then, when they felt sufficiently strong, they rebelled against the central power<sup>1</sup>.

Al Mansur tried to remedy this defect by frequent changes of Governors and by keeping the representatives of the great families out of these appointments; but it was a vain precaution: the 'nobodies' he substituted for them committed worse exactions still and were no more loyal. At this time the revenue of the Empire was estimated at thirty millions sterling, obtained from Jizyah, Kharaj, tithes, mines, tribute from

<sup>1</sup> Quatremère - Mem. hist. sur la dynastie des Khalifes Abbassides.



foreign nations, and estates reverting to the State<sup>1</sup>.

Capitation and land taxes under the early Arab kingdom were collected in Egypt, Syria, 'Iraq, and Persia. A schedule of taxes was drawn up and the relative values were stated of sheep and camels, so that whilst the greater part of the alms was paid in camels, sheep were made to serve as change.

After the Arab conquest Umar I raised only 120 millions silver mitkals in Sawad, but the revenue decreased to about half owing to the plundering and burning of the district by the Arabian troops, whereby agriculture was ruined. Under Mu'awiya the revenue realized only 1000 million dirhams. Even this amount was difficult to obtain, and under Ubaidullah there was a still further dropping off in the amount. Umar ibn Al Khattab sent Uthman ibn Hunaif to make a survey of the region west of the Tigris Sawad ('Iraq); the area was found to be 36 million jaribs. Each jarib was assessed at one dirham and one kafiz. This tax applied to each jarib whether cultivated or uncultivated provided that it was accessible to water. The assessment on "ratbah", a term which might include not only clover but cucumbers, melons and the like,

<sup>1</sup> Servier - Islam and the Psychology of the Musulman.



was 5 dirhams and 5 kafizes, whilst trees were assessed at 10 dirhams.

We are told by an historian writing more than two centuries after the conquest that the poll tax was 48, 24, or 12 dirhams<sup>1</sup> according to the affluence of the individual. Each jarib of palm trees and of vine was assessed at 10 dirhams, sugar-cane at 6 dirhams, wheat at 4 dirhams, and barley at 2 dirhams, and all assessments were endorsed by Umar. Later, under the rule of Mughirab ibn Shubah, we find products other than those already mentioned above, Indian peas and sesame, and these, together with the grapes and ratbah, were assessed at 8 dirhams per jarib, excluding palm trees. The assessments appear to have varied from time to time under the different rulers. The assessment by Ali-ibn-Abu-Talib is interesting whereby a distinction was made in thickly, thinly, and medium-sown wheat, whilst the barley rates were half those of the wheat, with a flat rate for gardens and no assessment on vegetables. The landlords paid 48, merchants of medium means 24, and the farmers 12 dirhams per annum. Sawad was the richest province in Umayyad times<sup>2</sup>. Under Kobad Ibn Fyruz it gave in revenue

<sup>1</sup> See Baladhuri - Kitab Futuh al-Buldan - Origins of the Islamic State, p.426.

<sup>2</sup> See Die Kultur der Gegenwart II,2,1 pp.52 et seqq; also von Kremer op.cit. Vol.I, p.258.



15,000,000 silver mitkals.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the early Arab conquests, provinces were acquired and a considerable amount of revenue was raised from these territories. Under the Umayyads the same practice of drawing on the provinces was continued, for Syria was poor and did not yield the great sums necessary to satisfy the scheme of pensions, the support of the central administration, and the payment of troops. Moreover, the amount of booty falling to the exchequer became less and less as the newly-acquired territories were further away from headquarters. The efforts of the Umayyads to draw sums from the provinces were not very successful, especially in the case of acquired territories which were at a great distance from Headquarters; not only did they fail to secure much wealth from the earlier conquered lands, but the amount of booty which fell into the State exchequer also diminished. Even the introduction of a universal

<sup>1</sup> The recent figures are 1921-22, 572 lakhs of rupees from all sources; 1922-23, 418 lakhs of rupees, and 1924-25, 260 lakhs of rupees.

One lakh equals 100,000 rupees, and a rupee equals 1s.6d. at present: this is equal to £4,290,000; £3,185,000 and £3,450,000, the largest part of which is obtained from customs.



coinage failed to secure that union which it was realised was very desirable and essential.

The builders of the prosperity of the Abbasides were the enlightened Persian advisers, the Barmecides; their disgrace at the hands of Harun was a great mistake, and led to the decay of Musulman grandeur.

The Abbasids for the first two hundred years of their rule found the provinces, especially Sawad, a great source of revenue, but the question had already arisen regarding their government. Deterioration was beginning, as we know: the provinces gradually became partially independent members of the kingdom and imposed taxes of their own. The central power never became strong enough to break the separate existence which was to be found in most of them. So light was the hold by the central State that its existence almost disappeared, and it came to consist of the town-state of Baghdad. During the Abbasid dynasty the complicated state machinery worked with fluctuating success. The Khalifah was assisted by his Vizier, who handled the enormous amount of work which required technical knowledge, and who took over the control, so that the ruler could devote himself entirely to Royal matters and keep himself from direct contact with the common people. This system was very



convenient in many ways, since the Khalifahs were able to follow a life of pleasure and had a convenient scapegoat in evil times. After Mansur the Abbasid Khalifahs had little knowledge of state administration, and neither knew nor cared about the multifarious troubles which arose<sup>1</sup>. The admirable energy of the Barmecides made them very successful, and their management and control of official positions were satisfactory. Even Viziers with complete control had to suffer encroachments on the part of their rulers, especially in the matter of appointments of governors of provinces. The result was that, if the Vizier was a man of character, there was bound to be a struggle between the Imam and himself, and co-operation was impossible. One can easily see how difficult it would be if the Khalifah demanded the execution of orders which any intelligent person could see would have the most harmful results upon the general welfare of the kingdom, and even upon the individuals concerned. This state of affairs was frequent in the case of the later Khalifahs on account of their senseless extravagance, and the leading statesmen, who wished to carry out

<sup>1</sup> See Fakhri extract re Abbasides on pp. 23 and 25.



any measure for the good of the community, saw their positions in danger through intrigue. We cannot wonder then that all ranks of the community were imbued with unscrupulousness. The governors of provinces, too, by right of their absolute power, were in a position to act without scruple. The powers of the governor were extensive but his duties were numerous. First of all he had to attend to military organisations, and he paid the troops under his authority. In the case of the annexation of outlying provinces acquired by conquest, he had to divide the spoil. Secondly, the governor represented the Khalifah in all business except the poor-rate, which was collected by special officials. In short, the system of administration in general, and of land matters in particular, was distinctly unsatisfactory and unhealthy. There was no continuous policy which aimed at assisting the people to settle in agricultural pursuits. The security offered was very doubtful, and the development of land was at times problematical. The ancient system of irrigation was dependent upon the whims of the successive rulers of the country, and any encouragement that was offered was made with the ulterior motive of gain to the individual, rather than to the amelioration of the conditions of the poorer



classes. One realises, however, that the tribal confederations, with their tribal laws and customs, always presented tremendous difficulties; but one would have imagined that the Arab's love of wealth and display, a feature which has always been predominant, would have led to the maintenance of, at least, the source of supply of his wealth.

The administrative form of the Umayyad and Abbasid States was a financial one<sup>1</sup>. There was a gold and silver currency with a fluctuating rate of exchange. Revenue was paid in money and in kind, but mostly in money. Officials and soldiers received their wages in money, and the tax laws of Umar have been handed down to us in terms of money, whilst cash books are extant showing money transactions for small domestic expenses<sup>2</sup>. The enormous amount of specie in the accounts of numerous writers confirm the preponderance of a financial administration. The financial basis which was particularly effective on taxable estates forms the basis of Ikta'at - the assigning of lands which is represented as a parallel to western feudalism<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Der Islam Bd IV, 197 et. seqq.

<sup>2</sup> & <sup>3</sup> Der Islam Bd V, Pt. I, pp. 82 and 83.



We know how the Turkish influence grew during the Abbasid Khalifate and subsequently. The army contained large numbers of soldiers of Turkish origin, and these men gave much trouble; from time to time they dominated the country, plundering and overawing the citizens. But the real Turkish invasion began about the year 1040 A.D., under the Seljuk dynasty. Apart from several Mongol raids, from 1100 to 1500 northern Mesopotamia was ruled by various Turkish houses. We have only to look at the systems of land tenure and the general organisation of agriculture, to see how very unsatisfactory the position became in 'Iraq. At one time or another during the history of mankind almost every conceivable form of land tenure has been tried, and in one country or another to-day, we find remains of these systems. In one country we find the majority of farmers owning their farms, in another only renting them, either from an individual land owner or from the state. In another system we find that the commune owns the land and allots it to cultivators who till the soil collectively. Again, we find the form of state-ownership, where the state owns the land on behalf of the people. In the early ages there was no ownership of land, but later tribes had recognised rights to certain areas over



which their animals grazed, and they strongly resisted any encroachments. This condition led later on to areas becoming defined, but gradually, portions were allotted to individuals to cultivate. This individual ownership grew, until to-day we find that the major part of land is owned by private individuals.

The actual cultivator of the soil always appears to have suffered. The system of fiefs was always detrimental to his interests. The state land was always given to courtiers and soldiers<sup>1</sup>, and in consequence, the grantees were at liberty to impose upon the workers on their land<sup>2</sup>. Generals gradually acquired such power over property that the Khalifah and the Government became playthings in their hands. Taxes were no longer paid in respect of land which had been disposed of in such a manner, and passed out of the control of state officials. The taxes accruing from the comparatively small portion that remained

<sup>1</sup> An early example of a qati'ah, or gift of land by a Khalifah, see Aghani VI - 165 (new ed. VI, 160), where Sulaiman ibn Adb-al-Malik, 96-99 A.H. assigns a poet a qati'ah in Hadhan (probably in Arabia).

<sup>2</sup> Amedroz - Abbasid Administration - its decay.



were "farmed".<sup>1</sup> A noteworthy point, in connection with these gifts of lands, was the easy terms on which they were granted, owing to the desolate and unproductive nature of many parts of the country. In many cases the persons to whom grants were made sold the land, made no attempt to cultivate, and unscrupulously appropriated the revenue of the state. The questions of law and order, of taxes and productivity did not appeal to them, but they took money wherever they could, and succeeded in ruining the sources from which the state revenues were obtained. As a natural result, the peasants fell into great misfortune and poverty. Land which had not already been disposed of was generally made over to one of two parties. These were either the leading military commanders, or the civilian members of the official classes<sup>2</sup>. The military men were keen on realising money profits. They raised grievances and claimed abatements which, if not granted, led to their becoming openly rebellious. If, on the other hand, they were treated in a more lenient manner, then there was no

<sup>1</sup> See Abu Yusuf-Kitab al Kharaj, and Von Kremer Abbasiden bugets; also Der Islam Bd V, Pt.I, p.85.

<sup>2</sup> J.R.A.S. 1913 - Amedroz - The Abbasid Administration in Decay.



limit to their demands. The second class threw their liability on the Government and profited at its expense. Naturally, their greatest concern was for protection of themselves and their interests, and they resorted to any expedient, such as bribery, in order to attain this. The strong gained, the weak suffered. The increasing military spirit of the state led to growing anarchy and consequent decadence, and this condition was to be seen plainly in the political divisions of the provinces. Much land was laid waste owing to the continuous state of war, famine, and plundering. The Generals took the best villages, which prospered under their management, but this increased prosperity did not assist the central administration. The maintenance of waterways was neglected, and many became useless and disappeared.

—The one work which appears to have been well done was the collection of taxes by undisciplined soldiers.

Corruption was rampant, and state revenues, instead of going into the Government Treasury, went straight to the pockets of the military, whether they had acted as tax-collectors or landed proprietors. Eventually this led to the division of the land amongst the troops, and the tenure was given to them as pay. This led to the greatest interest in its prosperity, and in



a comparatively short time it was restored to a good condition. This procedure, which was carried out by Nizam al Mulk, was a pattern for the whole Muslim world. It was the introduction of feudalism as known to the Seljuq Turks (1086 A.D.)<sup>1</sup>.

The basis of feudalism is the need for protection and, in tracing the conditions and various phases of ownership, tenure, and taxation of land, we note that the thorny problem in every administration has been relative to the tenure and taxation of land. All civilised communities are bound to be affected by these questions: the problem affects our every-day existence. In Islam some of these ancient forms have remained to the present day, but the first freedom from these practices was obtained with the removal of Turkish Feudalism in the nineteenth century. The leasing of taxes was a very common practice which, apart from its pernicious nature, resulted in much damage to the land. The Mukhtars and tax collectors were the intermediaries between the peasant and the State.

Some comparison is possible between the feudalism of the East and that of the West, although they

<sup>1</sup> Der Islam Bd V, Pt.I, pp. 89-90,  
also J.R.A.S., 1913.



developed out of different economic conditions. Necessities led to similar customs, but the similarity is only of a superficial nature. The feudal system gave the landlord a certain superiority over the tenants. The decisive change in the development of the Oriental feudalism took place about the time of the Crusades. In the West, feudalism was an attempt to solve the problem of defending the country on the basis of service in return for the holding of land; when the customary services were gradually replaced by money payments, administration on a financial basis was developed, and strict feudalism decayed.

The Normans had a theory that the King was sole owner of all the land, which was foreign to the Anglo-Saxons. William I rather checked than encouraged the progress of feudalism; he realised that if England continued to develop on the same lines as hitherto, it would soon be in the condition of Germany, that is, governed by princes owing nominal allegiance to the King. Among the Anglo-Saxons, feudalism had all the centrifugal tendencies of continental feudalism and, as in Germany, it was dependent not so much on land-tenure as on service. William secured the direct allegiance of all freemen to himself, over and above their allegiance to their intermediate lord.



The decline in the prosperity of 'Iraq after Harun has already been noticed; the country was still productive; there was a water supply which allowed the growing of grains and the maintenance of gardens, but these water courses were not well kept; the administration of land matters grew steadily worse; the Khalifas lessened in the effectiveness of their control; their authority was usurped by their own overlords and the empire shrank into a single province.

† In the middle of the thirteenth century the final act of destruction was carried out by Hulaku and his followers; there was a studied destruction of dykes and headworks whose ancient and perfected system had been the sole source of wealth. The few survivors were broken in spirit, so that the inattention and lack of repair soon brought about not only temporary, but almost hopeless, destruction<sup>1</sup>. If Hulaku had carried out less than total destruction, the balance would, no doubt, have been blotted out by the violent acts of Timur the Lame, the last and greatest of the Mongols, in his attack on Baghdad in 1401.† The constant intrigue, turmoil and strife rendered the whole country so insecure that the inhabitants could

<sup>1</sup> Longrigg, p.13 et.seq.



not settle to their cultivation; the tribes roamed at will in search of pastures for their flocks and herds. This depressing condition continued until the sixteenth century.

A change occurred with the successful appearance of Sulaiman; soldiers who had distinguished themselves in the campaign were granted estates with feudal liability of service; orders were given for the charting of the province and for a fair assessment of the tax 'farms'<sup>1</sup>. The fief system now introduced by the Sultan did not take root in 'Iraq as it had done in other provinces<sup>2</sup>. The settlement of fiefs and recruitment of vassal forces were more important to the new governors than the contentment of the people and the development of the resources, or the restoration of national prosperity. The appointment of unsuitable governors, with their abuses, is a noticeable feature in the affairs of the middle of the century: appointments were a marketable asset; the tax farm of a province fell to the highest bidder - the further the province from Stamboul the more excess was likely to be practised by local governors. The

<sup>1</sup> Longrigg, p.13 et.seqq.

<sup>2</sup> Von Hammer - Hist. of Turkey, Paris 1841, Vol. V, p.220



lawless freedom of the tribes continued unabated; the body of officials made the best of their feudal tenants; the incidence of taxation, mostly on dates and sheep, obeyed no rule but that of maximum and immediate yield. The feudal rally, the basis of the Turkish provincial system, was never a leading phenomenon in 'Iraq<sup>1</sup>.

Theoretically, the appointment of a Pasha was annual, but in practice this was not carried out; the first care of each Pasha, for three centuries, was to divide the lands of his province into the usual number of 'farmable' units, and to lease them to the highest reasonable bidder; the 'farmers' were indistinguishable from governors; at times they were specifically both. Payment was enforced by the governor through his Janissaries, or they would loan out these men to rapacious collectors. f

A brief Persian re-occupation in the seventeenth century brought no better conditions; many grants of land were made, only to be cancelled by Sultan Murad IV. No works of development or importance were attempted; insecurity in Central 'Iraq and in the desert maintained its normal level: there was a

<sup>1</sup> Longrigg, p.48.



time of general uneasiness. The Turkish resumption in the control of affairs served only to emphasize or confirm their inabilities; taxes were increased or modified, but no principle of taxation was conceived. In 1649 the Grand Wazir, Ahmad Pasha, ordered a method of fixed assessment; the collection was more tyrannical than ever, with its attendant oppression. These 'reforms' were abolished by Qara Mustafa Pasha in 1651, and the vicious circle of change continued. There was no change, however, in the grinding exaction of the tax-collectors until 1671-74, when disciplinary action was taken against the worst of the local governors. The tyrannical Janissaries, however, were still free shamelessly to abuse their power in this, as in every other province of the Turkish Empire. The only other incident worthy of note in this century was the compilation of a Domesday Book of the Basrah Province in 1670<sup>1</sup>.

During the eighteenth century, 'Iraq appears to have enjoyed an interval of relative contentment: the individual success of the Slave-Pasha, Sulaiman Abu Lailah, was outstanding. While the revenues were still obtained, there was less oppression and less severity

<sup>1</sup> Longrigg op.cit. p.119.



in collection; the effectiveness of this rule, however, led to no permanent results in the shape of a settled policy, based on sound principles. At this time 'Iraq was a respectful neighbour of the Sultan rather than a province of Turkey; it was a period of Ottoman decline when 'Iraq, in common with Wahhabi Arabia and Mamluk Egypt scarcely recognised the authority of the Sultan<sup>1</sup>.

+ Mamluk 'Iraq continued its course into the nineteenth century; lands were still sold or bestowed upon favourites; the persistent attempt to detribalize was, no doubt, the motive for a continuance of this policy. While the powerful remained untouched, the accessible few were taxed as ruthlessly as ever; revenue was collected by expedients of varying age and origin; life was cheap, there were some survivals of feudal usage, and some means newly devised by the latest Pasha. Only a fraction of the payments exacted from the 'farm' reached the Treasury.

But times were changing; the weaknesses of the Mamluk dynasty in 'Iraq, founded by Hasan Pasha in 1704, were soon to end. At the end of the eighteenth century, Sultan Salim III issued decrees which were to be applied to the provinces. Among these was the

<sup>1</sup> Longrigg op.cit. p.198.



absorption of feudal lands into the domains of the State; feudal abuses were to end; tax farming and its oppressive abuses were to vanish. But these 'blessings' were not yet to affect 'Iraq. Meanwhile, Daud Pasha, in Baghdad, was bestowing and entailing most of 'Iraq soil upon favourites and dependents; it was not without trouble that 'Iraq was restored to the Ottoman dynasty in 1831.

The corrupt class of Effendis continued to practise their deceitfulness; the tribes continued in their lawlessness; the bestowal of lands was still going on.

A great change came with the appointment, in 1869, of Midhat Pasha, a man of enlightened views of administration, who had already achieved success as a ruler in other parts of the Turkish Empire. Among the many reforms which he instituted, the land-registration system was, from our point of view, the most important. This was a system from which gross error, vagueness, and corruption must necessarily result; it was one of the many failures to be experienced by Midhat in 'Iraq. Of his many creations, the reasoned tribal agrarian policy was intended to reclaim the wide spaces of 'Iraq to settlement and profit, simultaneously civilising



the tribes. The attempt at settlement from the land itself was a new method of approach. Recently estates had been bestowed by various Pashas; descendants clung to feudal title deeds; the sale and purchase of State lands had been going on for generations without the knowledge or recognition of the Government; mere lengthy possession had led the villagers and shaikhs of wide tribal areas to claim their holdings as, de facto, 'mulk'. The absence of definite rights checked settlement.

Midhat Pasha's method was to sell for little or easy payment, great tracts of State lands upon terms giving security of tenure (though not actual ownership). Tapu offices were opened, registers filled, titles issued, first instalments paid; and high hopes were formed. \*

"But the method could not wholly succeed in the face of two major difficulties. The first, the ignorance and venality of the Tapu officials meant that the machinery of Tapu was always inadequate to its functions. The second lay in the faint response of the public to be benefited. Many saw the clear purpose of detribalizing; more suspected any blessing that issued from the Sarai; and more again were still too well content with their own



"remoteness to accept a change. Vivid fear of  
 "conscription kept the tribes from accepting the  
 "obligations of settlement, which had other evils  
 "enough in accessibility, toil, and dependence on  
 "canals and markets. There was, in any case,  
 "money to be paid. The majority of tribal leaders  
 "feared and shunned the new status; some were fore-  
 "stalled as purchasers by a town-dwelling speculator  
 "friendly with the Tapu officials; some gladly  
 "acquired rights, but in land far from their own  
 "people; others paid a first instalment and with-  
 "held the rest. Thus in the aim of Tapu settlement,  
 "was fixity of tribal-cultivating tenure which should  
 "transform shaikh into landlord; it was an aim largely  
 "frustrated by the hesitancy of the shaikhs themselves"<sup>1</sup>.

The Tapu lacked too many essentials to be suc-  
 cessful. There were no maps, no surveyors, no  
 sufficiently-educated staff or supply of honest  
 officials. Methods of assessment were many:- esti-  
 mation of crops; counting the trees and water-lifts';  
 the 'farming' of tax collection on whole estates; and  
 bargaining for lump sum demands. Whichever system  
 was applied, the officials were unreliable.

The greatest feat accomplished by Midhat Pasha

<sup>1</sup> Longrigg - Four Centuries of Modern  
 'Iraq - p.307.



was the deathblow given to the Sa'duns of the Muntafiq.

It would appear that the religious law of Islam hardly influenced at all the systems of land tenure in 'Iraq, and the striking feature in 'Iraq is that, whilst in all other Muhammadan countries we are accustomed to find Islamic religious law dominating everything, here it is calmly pushed aside and the matter left to local custom or to civil law. Exactly the same thing happened in India whether Muhammadan or Hindus were involved, when the religious law was overruled by the laws and customs of the country.

Customary law appears to have prevailed amongst the Arabs in most of their dealings. Where it has not been possible to decide questions according to the Moslem law, then, with admirable fidelity, they have solved their problems in time-honoured fashion, and continue to do so with the utmost goodwill and persistency.

'Iraq is not alone in its incongruities. The history of India during the Muhammadan period reveals flagrant examples of mal-administration wherein theory and fact have been completely estranged.

"From the thirteenth to the nineteenth century,



"Moslem kings decided, in the exercise of their  
 "despotic power, the three questions which concerned  
 "the prosperity of the peasants; and when we examine  
 "the institutions of a particular king, we have to  
 "ask what share he took, how he assessed it, and  
 "in what form he demanded payment".<sup>1</sup>

Alau-d-din, a King of Delhi, had no acquaintance with learning and never associated with the learned. When he became King, he came to the conclusion that polity and government are one thing, and that the rules and decrees of law are another. Royal commands belong to the King, legal decrees rest upon the judgment of the Kazis and Muftis. In accordance with this opinion, whatever affair of State came before him, he only looked to the public good, without considering whether his mode of dealing with it was lawful or unlawful. He never asked for legal opinions about political matters, and very few learned men visited him.

We have a record of an interesting conversation between the Sultan and the Kazi, wherein the Sultan asks a number of questions; the Kazi fears for his life and answers the Sultan according to the sayings

<sup>1</sup> J.R.A.S., July, 1926 - p.450. An account of Sher Shah's (1540-1545) Revenue System.



of the Prophet and the expositions of the learned. This means that he has to declare unlawful the Sultan's actions in the government of his people. However, it is happy to state that the Kazi escaped with his life, and carried away with him a robe and a thousand tankas<sup>1</sup>.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Turks displayed a desire to imitate modern Europe, especially France, and we can note immediately the debt the Turkish Land Code owes to the Code Napoleon.

If the people of 'Iraq had been given a chance to evolve a system, it would have been interesting; but a tapu system was thrust upon them, and a more unsuitable or unworkable system it would be difficult to imagine. The Land Code, the Qanun-al-Aradi, bears a striking resemblance to the Roman system; the basis really consists in the recognition of various degrees of limitations on the plenary right of ownership and the division of the land into classes accordingly.

The Land Code consists of the Land Law itself, promulgated in 1858, and a number of subsidiary enactments made in the succeeding twenty years. The objects aimed at in this body of legislation were fourfold. An attempt was made to offer security to

<sup>1</sup> Elliot - History of India, Vol.III., London 1871 - pp.184-188.



the cultivator, this being the keystone of agricultural prosperity; the State resumed its right and duty of direct dealing with all possessors of State lands; distinctions were removed so far as State lands were concerned, between Moslem and non-Moslem revenue payers; the more efficacious protection of State rights and interests made in such lands, in the management of which the State, acting through the Ministry of Tapu, obviously contemplated taking an active part.

Tapu has the following connotations<sup>1</sup>:- an act of homage, acknowledging oneself a vassal, accepting the conditions of service of a lord, sovereign, or government, mainly by acceptance of a feudal fief; a title deed of a feudal fief, formerly given to a yeoman by a superior lord; a title deed of the freehold of a landed estate, delivered by the office of the Daftar Khanah (Ottoman Domesday Book); the fee payable for a title deed.

A Tapu "Sanad" is a copyhold title deed held of a landed estate under the Ottoman Sultan or Government. Ardh Tapu is Crown land held by any proprietor in fee simple. Haqq Tapu are the rights and conditions on which

<sup>1</sup> See Redhouse - Turkish Lexicon



Crown land is held by a proprietor; the fee for delivery of a title deed is called Tapu.

The Tapu Department discharges two principal functions; it is concerned with the registration of title, and all transfers and mortgages required to be registered with the Courts, are to take notice of them; it is concerned with the protection of Government lands and the prevention of encroachments upon them, which are of very frequent occurrence. These encroachments generally take the form of tree planting or the erection of buildings, and the encroacher seeks to take out a title deed for the land thus acquired. The process by which private persons obtain a title, generally without paying money to Government, is known as Badl al Mithl. It would seem quite reasonable for the State to claim a purchase value for such lands. It might appear that the inspection and valuation of the land, also the determination of rights, would be an easy matter; but in the tribal areas the difficulties are accentuated by the tribal rights involved. An example is found in the Hammar Lake in the Suq district where, as a result of silt removed by dredgers in making a navigable channel through the lake, much



land was reclaimed and used for rice growing. Claims were hastily made by the adjacent tribes to the reclaimed land, and it was interesting to hear how accurately each tribe professed to know its own boundaries, even when these had been submerged for some generations. Another difficulty frequently experienced is due to the existence of Waqf properties, which are not registered, but are held under certificates issued by the Shara' Courts. This process secures exemption from registration fees, and here again it would appear that there is need for a revision of the current practice. The religious aspects must not be lost sight of, affecting as they do the general political situation; the delicate nature of these details in connection with Land Administration is once again emphasised. The common application of the present system always appears to work against the best interests of the Central Authority.

The Land Law is not long, but comprises 132 articles divided between an introduction and three Books. Its provisions are not applicable to mulk lands and true Waqf, i.e. mulk land dedicated to pious uses.



Book I deals with State lands - concerning the nature of possession, the transfer of State lands, the devolution of State lands by inheritance, escheat of State lands.

Book II similarly treats of land classes as Matrukah and Mewat.

Book III contains miscellaneous provisions, among these the intention to compel every occupant of land or immovable property to take out a proper Tapu Sanad for what he occupies. Undisputed occupation of State lands for ten years entitled the occupant to a title deed. The Act broke down, but it did infinite harm in 'Iraq.

✕ Although this was, no doubt, an honest effort to improve the conditions of land tenure, the power of the Arab tribes, the nomadic instincts of the Arabs, political instability and the scarcity of cultivators, all assisted in the failure of the attempt. The agrarian trouble, such as we know it now, is attributed to Midhat Pasha, Wali of Baghdad 1869-1872. He tried by the Tapu system to stabilize conditions in 'Iraq. The system might have worked well in and around the towns, but the tribesmen, fearing conscription, held aloof. The rich merchants for small sums obtained huge tracts



of agricultural lands, of which boundaries and areas were stated without discretion, and regardless of the tribal occupants of the soil. The townsmen and tribesmen had for centuries been at daggers drawn, and the mutual hostility was increased by the creation of a large class of possessors of State lands from among the townsmen. X

The tribes, however, lacked cohesion, and in cases where the support of the Shaikh was bought with the land, as in several instances in the neighbourhood of Baghdad, the new possessors consolidated their possessions. In the Hillah area the tribes were strong, and the new owners existed on sufferance; in the Muntafiq, although the tribes acknowledged the Sa'dun, yet they revolted against the demand for one-fifth of the gross produce, and drove most of the Sa'dun overlords from their lands. The conditions in Mosul were not so unstable as those in lower 'Iraq, and the Tapu system did not meet with such dire results, although it was detrimental to the peasantry. The Turks did not recognise the quasi right of the tribal elements over State lands, and as a result, the tribal rights over these estates remain as an unsolved problem.

In the case of small properties, and holdings near a town, there is at least one reason for the non-



existence of Tapu documents, since 51 rupees would have to be paid on a plot value 200 rupees. The description of the boundaries in these sanads was not according to the points of the compass; the document was not kept up to date, and generally the areas, where mentioned, were incorrect.

There is a mixture of conditions in respect of the land tenure in 'Iraq to-day. It was inevitable that the wandering tribes should at some time find themselves upon the limits of the desert, and for some reason or other, such as tribal conflicts or economic pressure, should look to agriculture as a means of livelihood. The result has been that many of the tribes have become widely scattered over the cultivated land in their settlement. The transition from the wandering to the settled life is always a slow process, but the Turkish administration did not assist very materially to hasten this. The effect of Ottoman administration failed to reach far beyond the immediate neighbourhood of the large towns, and the result is that tribal organisation has not been abandoned, and tribal laws and customs still hold good. The revenue system is of supreme political importance, and the Turkish Civil Bureaucracy and skeleton army persisted in their



impossible task of trying to govern according to their code, and attempting to maintain a semblance of order. History has proved how badly the Turkish Empire has been and is governed, and 'Iraq, no less than other lands, has suffered from its centuries of Turkish misrule. The real governing power of 'Iraq has rested in the hands of the Shaikhs or Head Men, and so deeply rooted is this power in the minds of the people, that, for generations to come, this must be the basic form of their government. The jurisdiction of the Shaikh is obviously a great asset in the administration of districts like the marsh areas of lower 'Iraq. Amongst these tribes the crudest forms of justice are in vogue, and in considering the question of land tenure and administration these factors must be taken into account.

The judicial aspect of land tenure is important. The people of 'Iraq being roughly divided into two categories, town dwellers and tribesmen, it is obvious that they have different social conditions. Since all laws are framed to suit the social conditions of the people for whom they are intended, it is necessary that there should be special laws for criminal and civil tribal matters. The tribes form more than half the population of the country: the provision of



special laws is not intended to prevent unity.

Article 87 of the 'Iraq Constitution of 1924 provides for the setting up of special Courts or Tribunals to settle tribal cases, criminal and civil, in accordance with tribal practice. During the discussion on this Article, some tribal deputies to the Assembly claimed that the rights of Chiefs or Shaikhs over their tribes should be protected by the Government, and that tribal boundaries should be fixed.

It appears that the Shaikhs sought a comprehensive statement of their rights, and asked for special legal provisions, making a guarantee of the lands in their possession.

The numerous disputes, the feuds and general unrest, caused in tribal areas by questions of land tenure are, in present circumstances, bound to continue. A special law based on traditional tribal practice would tend to a reduction in the number of these. As far as possible the law should be in accordance with civilised practice and convention.

In many respects the Turk might appear to have had peculiar opportunities in dealing with the Arabs. The authority of the Qur'an was apparently on their side. Justice to the Occidental mind implies a sense of the distinction between right and wrong



and secures the punishment of the wrong-doer. To maintain law and order is essential. The Oriental conception of justice is different from the western; it does not help to secure the easy administration of laws, such as guide the relations between citizens of any western country. The Ottoman Government in this, as in all its administrative services, had in theory a complete and tolerable judicial system, but in practice it scarcely existed. Admittedly the Turkish officers submitted periodical returns showing cases dealt with, the collection of fines, and other relevant matters, but these were fictitious documents. There were certain factors which were, and are, of much more importance than either the presence, or attitude of, officials in a country like 'Iraq. The question becomes more complicated when foreigners like ourselves, who are 'Kaffirs', attempt to instil the principles of Justice, as practised by an enlightened nation, into the minds of the Arabs. The Turks had not the difficulty of religious difference, and yet they were by no means successful in their administration of the country. The common religious factor had led the Turk to rely, in the main, on sacred law, although provisions were also made beyond this, based largely on the Code Napoleon.



The Majalla, the Turkish Civil Code, published in 1869, rests on Muhammadan religious law, and Turkish jurists actually framed the Code, which is the foundation of Ottoman legal principles. A complication ensued, however, inasmuch as the Turks are Sunnis and of the Hanafi sect, and a large element of the 'Iraq population are Shiahhs. Not only were Shiahhs asked to accept Sunni ruling, but also the Sunnis of 'Iraq of the other three, of the four sects of Sunnis. Whilst the Majalla could deal with suits arising from cases of rent, sales, contract, exchange, and evidence, yet there were many matters with which it could not deal. For instance, domestic disputes, marriage, divorce, inheritance, and land cases - all these had to be brought before a Qadhi, a religious, and not a civil Judge; and the Shara' Courts were worked on Shara' law. In fixing this code the basis of judgment would be sought for in the Qur'an. In practice, too, this system leads to much unfair legislation, since so much rests upon the opinion of the individual Qadhi; and one does not receive, even from these religious men, a common line of thought or action. The interpretation of either the Qur'an, or the Hadith (traditions of the Prophet), or of previous cases,



either handed down by family tradition or within living memory, is subject to wide variation. The Courts under the Ottoman Administration were Civil, Criminal, and Shara'. But whilst these satisfied the demands theoretically, they assisted really very little in maintaining any semblance of law and order. Within the towns it was easier to make a better display of the legal machinery, chiefly by means of buildings and officials; but outside the town walls the basis of justice was rather the old time customs, the immemorial practices of the tribes where either Shaikh or Sayyid was capable of solving every difficulty in a manner that would satisfy both parties, at least for a time. This system has too many doubtful features if compared with our standards, but the important fact is that it received the approbation of the inhabitants, who found that in many respects it suited their purpose, since it allowed them plenty of opportunity for turmoil and strife.

The existing Courts in 'Iraq are following Turkish procedure, though with very material differences. The records of Civil Courts are kept in the Arabic language, whereas before they were kept in Turkish. Judges of civil Courts are now honest, and in view of the local reputation of the Turkish



Courts for dishonesty, this is a significant fact. It is now possible to obtain justice without bribery. The Turkish system of delay in appeal cases, either criminal or civil, was notoriously bad; the system now in vogue gives reasonable promptitude, although one must remember that the Arab does not particularly appreciate speedy justice, since the loser feels that due consideration has not been given him. An improvement in the pay of administrators and their careful selection has raised the competency of the present-day officials. Britishers have been precluded from introducing any radical changes in judicial administration, and an attempt has been made, not unsuccessfully, to administer justice on existing laws.

There is a theory that all land is the property of the State; a conquering power may choose to act upon this theoretical basis<sup>1</sup>. In 'Iraq, however, we were not fighting either the actual Arab or non-Arab owners, or the Arab cultivators; and yet, inasmuch as 'Iraq was governed by the Turkish Administration, in fighting and conquering the Turk, we assumed the responsibility of controlling the land system. But we regard ourselves as only guardians of the soil for

<sup>1</sup> The questions relative to acquisitions and administration in the Early Khalifate are well set forth in von Kremer - Culturgeschichte des Orients unter den Chalifen, V.I, Ch. 8.



for the men whose home it has been, and whose task it has been to attend to its cultivation for many hundreds of years. Our Mandate from the League of Nations makes us responsible for good government and a reasonable development of natural resources. The native government of 'Iraq has then taken the place of the Ottoman Government as theoretical owners of the land, and as such will apply the revenue therefrom for general administration. Meanwhile, as guiding power, the British are responsible for assisting the indigenous Government to a possible solution of the difficulties attending this question and for setting up organic laws.

In 'Iraq the settlement of the land question is nowhere a simple matter. There are many peculiar difficulties, such as the Sa'dun question in the Muntafiq country around Nasiriyah in the lower Euphrates, and the Sanniyah lands in the Amarah district. Further, there is the general question of assessment and collection of revenue. So great are these questions, and so closely related are the elementary necessities of law and order, the production of revenue, security of tenure and freedom from attack,



that it will be necessary to review fully these intricate problems. In examining the Sa'dun problem one might point out some slight analogy to the Oudh (India) land question. The basis of this settlement was a compromise ensuring that Government should receive its necessary revenue and that its demands should be satisfied. The Talakdars of Oudh correspond to the Mallaks or Sa'dun landlords in the Muntafiq country, but the question of sanads, deeds or documents granted by Government to the landlord, is not to be lightly compromised. The Oudh Talakdars accepted an arrangement whereby, in some cases, deeds were given for land in perpetuity and settled on a feudal basis, and the settlement was clear; but it will be obvious at once that the deeds in the Sa'dun question complicate matters very seriously, inasmuch as the boundaries are so inaccurately defined. The examination of the system of land administration in 'Iraq adopted by the Turks, has helped us to see what steps they took towards an equitable solution of the problems, and the consequent results from the points of view of the governing power and the governed, the latter partly comprising the landlord, tenant, and



labourer. We have seen how ignominiously they failed to provide a satisfactory system of land administration.



### A PECULIAR FEATURE

The Sa'dun problem.

General difficulties.

History of the Sa'dun; Midhat Pasha and a settlement.

Recent efforts to deal with the problem - a solution



THE SA'DUN PROBLEM.

In 'Iraq it has been realised from the beginning of the British Occupation that land matters are of first importance. As official records were destroyed and Turkish and Arab officials scattered, it was extremely difficult, on our occupation, to obtain any reliable information regarding land matters in 'Iraq. Land-owners themselves were thoroughly unreliable and unscrupulous. An attempt was made to collect the facts as far as possible, and to maintain some semblance of law and order with a view to a temporary pacification of all parties concerned. As will soon be realised this was not an enviable task. In the first case the tapu sanads (deeds) held by landlords all over the country, were almost hopeless as documentary evidence of possession and rights. The boundaries were so ill-defined that they defied the powers of the shrewdest inquirer. A piece of land being bounded on one side by the marsh, for example, was a changing amount, since the prevailing wind would affect the extent of the marsh, and the day of inspection might prove favourable or otherwise



and lead to much subsequent argument. Or again, a date palm or palms marking a boundary might well in course of time be destroyed; even a 'tel' (a mound) might in course of time lose its significance. These are only a few of the ineffective defining features utilized by Turkish officials in making out land deeds, useless for our purpose, but all part of the traditional executive machinery in the Ottoman administration. The difficulty was increased by the fact that the lands concerned were very often in disturbed tribal areas where, for the time being at least, no Turkish official or presuming landlord would dare to show himself. The sanad was made out either in an attempt to arouse the wrath of the Shaikh and his tribe, or, to procure a suitable bribe for the official from the person who desired the deed, the latter paying his bribe and legal dues, in the hope that the future might hold some favourable return for a comparatively small investment. The presentation of a deed for land was also a means of acknowledging service to Government under the Ottoman administration. Of course, the Turks could safely reward their servants with property of great face value, since little or none of this was to be obtained



without force, or long-drawn-out argument and an effort at compromise. Of the many areas where exists difficulty in this respect, the Muntafiq is perhaps the worst on account of its Sa'dun landlords, and the turbulent nature of the tribal elements who occupy the land. A further difficulty is created since a large part of the cultivable area is flooded for a number of months in the year, and it is almost impossible to control effectively tribes who are equally at home on land or water. The complicated methods of revenue assessment utilized by the Turks served to increase the difficulty of the task, with the result that land and revenue administration in the Muntafiq country is in a chaotic state. Only years of steadily applied and efficient administration can ever improve the situation. During our occupation of 'Iraq tribes have settled down ~~more~~ and more and more land is being cultivated.

In order to show the characteristics of the Muntafiq it is necessary to describe, in some detail, their varied political and economic history. The confederacy of 300,000 souls consists of settled, semi-nomadic and nomadic tribes who, prior to the agrarian revolution, owed allegiance to their overlords the



Sa'dun, who were the titular heads of the confederacy. At the present time the name Muntafiq is of little more than historic interest owing to the disintegration of the confederacy into a number of tribal units. Owing to the nature of the country, anti-government and internecine strife, the martial qualities of the tribal sections are highly developed<sup>1</sup>, and their rifles at present may be reckoned in tens of thousands.

In the Muntafiq country, and particularly in the most important crop-producing area of Suq, the tribes, for fifteen years prior to 1915, had paid neither revenue to Government nor rent to landlords. Any attempt at collection had only been ~~met~~<sup>made</sup> by force, and even then with scant success. Realising the failure of the Turkish administration, and aggravated by the question of Sa'dun landlordship, the tribes administered themselves. As a result in this district, particularly in the Suq and Hammar Lake section, there are numerous independent tribes, each with its own fighting towers and armed men; they constitute a fighting confederacy. The whole policy of the Turks was to break down the tribal system by which the tribesmen acknowledged the overlordship of the Shaikh

<sup>1</sup> See Jones - op.cit. p.357



but their efforts were not successful. There is one huge confederacy known as the "Beni Malich", with sub-divisions of Beni 'Asad, Al Bu Salih, Beni Khaigan, and Mugarrah, each of these sections having a recognised head. In spite of temporary readjustments and a change in the balance of power among the leaders, these sections are, on the whole, animated by a common spirit, and unite in action against a common foe, as was the case in their assistance to the Turks against our forces at the battle of Shai'bah, near Basrah. As opposed to the Turkish policy, we have rather followed the tribal system of organisation, and by supporting a Shaikh, have endeavoured to obtain an arrangement by which Government obtains its share of revenue and its control over the tribes. There are obvious disadvantages to this system, as will be gathered from a later chapter. No cast-iron policy has been possible, owing to the individual districts possessing peculiar difficulties, and to troublesome and even truculent individuals, but on the whole the policy has served its purpose. The fact that force was the main asset in whatever success was obtained should, however, not be forgotten. This was partly proved in the rebellion of 1920, when 'Iraq



had been practically denuded of troops. An attempt had been made to disarm the tribes, but in spite of this it was found that, on the whole, tribes were well able to defend themselves when occasion arose. In the Muntafiq country this is the present condition of the tribes, whose home has been for centuries on the land, and who, by a sort of prescriptive right, have come to consider themselves the rightful owners. Government control, other than by means of the tribal head, is foreign to their notions of proprietorship.

We may now proceed to a statement of the Sa'dun problem. The tribal league known as the Muntafiq stretches through a section of the Euphrates from Chabaish to Darraji, and from the Shatt al Gharraf to Hai. The Sa'dun are descended from Mani', one of the Sharifs of Mecca, who fled to the Euphrates to escape the consequences of a feud about A.D. 1600. He won influence over the Muntafiq tribes by deciding their disputes until, at last, they acknowledged him as their ruler. Between 1797 and 1802 the Muntafiq formed the chief bulwark of Basrah against the Wahhabis. Until about the year 1870, under the Sa'dun, the Muntafiq were almost independent of Turkish rule. About this period the Shaikhship was leased to the



great Nasir Pasha, the founder of the town of Nasiryah who, it is said, under the influence of Midhat Pasha, introduced and welcomed the Ottomanising influence among the Muntafiq. At this stage in the history of affairs, an attempt was made at regular land settlement by the Turks. The Sa'dun were bribed into accepting a change, by being converted into regular landowners from their position as tribute-receiving Chiefs. The tribes lost their status as landowners and became tenants, and the whole of the arable land was parcelled out between the Sa'duns and the Turkish Crown. From this period both the Sa'dun Chiefs and the Turkish rulers lost power over the tribes until finally, in 1911, the Turkish Government was compelled to institute a Committee of Enquiry, to investigate the causes of the rising against Sa'dun Pasha. The Commission was understood to "attribute "the Muntafiq troubles to the fact that arable lands "of the tribes are in the hands of a few powerful "Shaikhs who oppress their fellow-tribesmen and keep "them at variance, and that the proper remedy is a "thorough-going partition of the lands". This area was partly occupied by the British in 1915; a further part was occupied in 1918, and it was not until 1919



that any attempt could be made to gauge the results of an organised sound administration by British officials. In the year 1919, for the first time for many years, at least fifteen of the tribes paid revenue to Government, and under Government instructions, rent to the Sa'dun landlords. The tribes, although they did this, still smarted under the degradation of status from landowners to tenants, and never acquiesced in the change. The whole question of tribal peace and contentment was so wrapped up in the agrarian difficulty that serious attention has been devoted towards a solution of the problem. At first, in 1918, certain suggestions were made to establish a uniform system throughout the area. Fifty per cent. was to go to the fellah, twenty per cent. to Government, twenty per cent. to Mallak as rent, and ten per cent. to Sirkal or Shaikh. To this the tribes would not agree, but eventually a compromise was reached in respect of that year whereby thirty per cent. was paid by the tribes on land where there was no private ownership, and British officials were to settle the payment on this basis in respect of privately-owned lands where, in some cases, there were standing agreements between the parties concerned. As a result, on some lands thirty per cent.



of the crops was collected as rent and revenue; on others the fifteen per cent. revenue only was obtained. Having collected this rent, whether the land was owned by Government or not, it was a task to decide who, of the multitude of claimants, were the rightful owners of land, and the extent of their ownership, if any. Deeds were submitted which, as stated, had been made in the most irregular manner by the Turkish Authorities and not in accordance with the Tapu law. The wording of Title Deeds was in most cases extremely vague and quite incapable of interpretation on the land itself, to which it referred in such vague terms. In order that some idea may be given of the magnitude of this problem, the Suq district alone in the Muntafiq country, where the agrarian problem is most acute, covers an area of 2,750 square miles, thickly populated, and at least two hundred claims have to be investigated. Certain guiding principles were laid down in making these investigations. The Tapu Sanad was made the standard upon which all claims were to be judged, and the deed was to be construed quite literally. For instance, although the boundaries might allow for hundreds of donums, if there was a specific mention



in the deed of two hundred donums, the deed was accepted without question for that amount and no more. This system soon allowed of the various claims being placed into three classes - (1) a class where there were documents to which no prima facie objection existed; where tribes admitted a claimant as landlord, and the claimant could prove, by various evidences, that he did once hold possession; (2) cases where a claimant had a document not open to prima facie objection but objected to by the tribes and not supported by further evidence; (3) a claimant having no valid document, either sanad or of any other nature. Payments were made to classes (1) and (2) but not to class (3). Recipients were informed in writing that the payment was an act of grace and not an admission of landlordship by the Government. The spirit of compromise was the guiding feature in any attempt at solution, yet it is almost needless to state that the original question of settlement still remained. Here were certain individual Sa'duns given, by means of ill-provided sanads, proprietary rights in lands over which the tribes had exercised such rights without title deeds from time immemorial. Admittedly there had been times when



certain tribes had been forced to allow, temporarily, the claims of the tribute-taker, but for many years, prior to our occupation, they had disregarded almost all claims made upon them in this respect. A further point of interest is that, whilst these enquiries were going on and information was being given and recorded, officials were in a better position than ever to estimate the areas from which revenue could be demanded. The Arab, whether Shaikh or tribesman, was wily enough to avoid anything savouring of reality when giving estimates and, as in all dealings in the East, the bartering spirit entered into all transactions. Some Sa'duns had been able to keep in touch with their lands, and had standing arrangements by which they bargained annually with the tribes for their share of rent, and gave handsome rebates to the Shaikhs. This class of landlord was, of course, satisfied with the temporary arrangement and hoped for permanency. Others, who had never been able to collect rent, were even more highly delighted. Yet even this did not meet with the approbation of the majority of the Sa'duns. These were anxious to have an overlordship by which their authority and status would be recognised by the tribes more directly. They preferred to retain the old



customs, the kissing of their hands and feet by the tribesmen, in order to obtain remissions, and the opportunity to distribute apparent largesse in the form of Abbas, Zibun, and sheep. The tribesman was more or less prepared to accept any arrangement, for he knew that if necessary he could defend himself against any aggression or sign of outside interference, and if he was dissatisfied he could await a suitable time for action.

Whilst Government was strong enough to enforce the demands, all was well; but the time had to come when this was not possible, and this time was nearer at hand than many imagined. In any case, by reason of its mobility and scantiness of numbers in relation to the large areas of land available, a tribe was always protected against oppression from without, even as the individual in the tribe could escape from his tribe whenever necessary.

Although little has been said of the actual cultivator, the fellah, his position must be examined, for, after all, nothing can accrue to Government, landlord or Shaikh, if the work is not done. The fellah has to bear the cost of the cattle for ploughing, and of the seed which is sown. He has to



clean out irrigation channels and strengthen the banks ('bunds'), for which he receives no remuneration. If "Allah wills" he harvests his crop and gets 'nisf barid' - a cold half. Owing to scarcity of reapers he has to call in outside assistance, and for this he has to pay five per cent. to the reapers and a further five per cent. for "treading in". This ten per cent. is borne equally by the Sirkal or farmer, and the fellah. Should the crops fail, the unfortunate fellah loses all, for he gains no assistance from Mallak or Sirkal. There is one point, however, in favour of the fellah: the Sirkal does keep open house, organises labour, and provides money on loan to buy seed, and acts as intermediary between the fellah and Government.

As to the Sirkal, there is a new difficulty, for, provided the crops are harvested, the fellah obtains his fifty per cent. and the Government takes thirty per cent. for landlord and revenue, then the Sirkal's share is twenty per cent. It concerns the Sirkal very closely, inasmuch as the higher the amount paid to the landlord and to Government as revenue, the less he has for himself, so that here at least is a man in an important position who would prefer to deal direct



with the landlord, in order that good results might accrue to himself. From this point of view the question would appear to be one of Sa'dun landlord against tribal Sirkal. Since the Sa'duns as a whole do not comprise more than 5000 to 7000 souls there are many useful suggestions that might be offered. Why not buy them out and, by giving them a fixed sum, instal them in the land of their ancestors, and trust they will in time be persuaded or forced to work for themselves? It would be fatal to instal them as a landlord class, for they would not only hamper Government machinery, but would unsettle the tribes still further. Although a temporary arrangement was arrived at by which Government collected the landlords' dues, this was in no way satisfactory to any of the parties concerned. It is obvious that during this time Government was obtaining certain sums as revenue and as rent. Where claims were not allowed the money was collected from the tribes and the benefit accrued to the Government, so that neither Sa'dun nor tribesman was satisfied.

The general trend of events showed the tribes that they would have to pay, and they were promised some day a real "Land Settlement". What will the



final result be? Preliminary investigations have been made with a view to carrying out this Land Settlement, with the result that the position seems to offer the following alternative solutions:-

(a) The introduction of special legislation by which Government should acquire landlord's rights, and having done this, should allow Sirkals to purchase estates at fixed values.

(b) The setting up of proven landlords through the medium of the Land Settlement Commission as " 'Uqr" holders - that is, giving them fixed amounts of cash as their rents from estates for which they possess acknowledged rights. The 'Uqr differs from the Tapu tenant in that he has no right of possession and cannot interfere in the management of the land.

The work of Land Settlement in the Suq area was begun and much useful information was collected; but the rebellion of 1920 brought about a change of conditions and personnel, and the work was abandoned.

However willing the tribesman might be to join in a mutual arrangement, yet if every settlement is to affect his pocket adversely, he is bound to be troublesome. Centuries of bad administration are not to be



overcome within a decade; reform must not be too sudden for a slow-thinking race. Events have proved this, and, for the time being, the intricacies of district administration have been relegated to the background, whilst a general policy is being formulated. A great deal has been written on the Sa'dun question, because it is perhaps the most intricate agrarian problem in 'Iraq. There has always been a difficulty in the area, and the tribes have earned for themselves a notoriously bad name. They have been assisted in their refractory methods by the weakness of the governing power and their peculiar topographical situation. The district is full of possibilities and must have been looked upon by many envious eyes. The tradition handed to us was that of a turbulent area, full of quarrelsome, treacherous, and lawless tribes who refused the hand of conciliation, seething with discontent, and the inhabitants generally most strongly opposed to any form of government such as would, of necessity, ensure law and order with regular payment of revenue. During an all too short period of real prosperity, one had almost come to believe that there was truth in the Arab saying "Alhakim hakeem (the ruler is the



doctor)", but the rude shock came when the patient refused his doctor and still flourished.

The present situation is described in a recent official Report in the following terms: "The agrarian question, more acute in the Muntafiq division than elsewhere in 'Iraq, is still as far from solution as before, and demands a comprehensive agrarian survey. "As occasion permitted, such surveys have been carried out over sections of various districts."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Report, 1925, p.59.



## LAND REVENUE - ASSESSMENT

Turkish Methods.

Date Cultivation.

Khums.

Kharas.

System of apportionment of revenue demand.

Nisf Barid.

Mallak - Sirkal and Fellah - Theoretical Shares -  
Practical results.

Sirkala - A Gift - Talia.

Shitwi and Saifi - relative values.

Date tax - methods of assessment.

The farming of taxes - subsidies and rebates.

Tapu - land registration.



REVENUE - ASSESSMENT

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## LAND REVENUE

In the attempt to create and maintain an independent state in 'Iraq there has necessarily been much concern about revenues in general and Land Revenues in particular. According to current figures no less than seventy-five per cent. of the revenue is derived from land:- Revenue (thirty-one per cent.); and Customs and Excise (forty-four per cent.).

Land Revenue is described in full as "Land and Natural Produce Taxation and Revenue of Government Properties", and yielded 150 lakhs of rupees in 1924, of which 109.5 lakhs were realised from agricultural products and 30.5 lakhs from animals.

It is generally agreed that the levy which is exacted from the cultivator is much larger than this, but until a more satisfactory system is evolved, a larger sum is hardly likely to be realised. The Government share of forty per cent. on 'miri' and twenty per cent. on 'tapu' land is a high one (double what appears to have been the normal share in other parts of the Ottoman Empire).<sup>1</sup> Reform in Turkish

<sup>1</sup> J.R.A.S., July, 1926, p.448, shows that in Upper India during the Hindu period the fraction of one-sixth was commonly regarded as the appropriate



times was generally in the direction of reductions, the effect of which was to bring in more money to the Treasury. Corrupt practices were extremely widespread under the Ottoman regime, and these permeated the whole system of revenue assessment and collection. The essentials to a successful system were lacking, since the Turks were generally hostile to all progress, and were unable to maintain internal order, or to guard the country from external troubles; little attempt was made to develop the undoubted resources of the soil - this was probably due, in the main, to the scarcity of capital - and the foreign investor could not be expected to subscribe in view of the instability of the administration.

Land Revenue is comprised partly of taxation and partly of rent or profits. On 'lift' or 'rain' land (land which does not enjoy irrigation by canal) the Government has a claim to ten per cent. of the gross annual produce if the land is alienated (tapu land), and to twenty per cent. if it is unalienated (miri land). On 'flow' land (where there is irrigation without pumping) the Government claim as a general

amount of the King's share. This amount was fixed by the Sacred Law, but was sometimes exceeded. Moslem Kings did not observe this limitation; they exercised entire freedom to fix the share, which ranged from one-third to one-half.



rule twenty per cent. of the gross annual produce on 'tapu' land and forty per cent. on 'miri' land. Approximately seventy-five per cent. of the land under cultivation in 'Iraq is 'miri' land, showing that the Government has a large land-owning interest.

The assessment and collection of land revenue is something more than a straightforward financial task<sup>1</sup>. Its importance cannot be over-estimated, affecting as it does the whole social structure of the country; it affects tribal organisation and the position of the Shaikhs, and is associated with questions of policy in internal affairs.

Upon the defeat of the Turks, the British, for the time being, assumed possession on the Arab behalf of agricultural lands, and had a theoretical right at least to a share of the produce for administration and development. It would have been easy to assess and collect this, if the amount was a fixed recognised sum; but unfortunately this method of assessment did not appeal to either Turk or Arab. In Basrah an assessment was made at a fixed rate per "jarib" of land under date-tree cultivation. Midhat Pasha was responsible for this some sixty years ago. In Amarah,

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Mission Report, 1925.



however, the country has been cut up into huge farms named locally muqata'ahs, and these farms, which are much too large for any one man either to farm or to look after, were put up to auction amongst Shaikhs of tribes for a term of years, usually five. Other parts of 'Iraq were assessed on a "Kerid" basis - that is, the amount of land watered by the bucket or buckets in a water lift. Generally speaking, other cultivable land was assessed yearly, and the amounts fluctuated with the political state of the country or particular area, and the state of the crops.

The method of arriving at these variable estimates is a subject for further examination. Neither security of tenure nor freedom from attack could be guaranteed to the farmers or the cultivators, and these factors largely governed the situation and often proved the determining points in the assessing and collecting of revenue. It is not to be expected that a farmer with few labourers is going to improve land, if there is a likelihood of some stronger force coming along and claiming the area. Further, the climatic conditions and the water supply are perplexing questions, and the agriculturist must consider the prospect of no return for his labour and outlay on implements, seed,



and necessary appurtenances. Yet again, there are locusts and other destructive factors whose advent none can foretell, occurring as they do at irregular intervals. The question of the water supply is full of difficulties, since, apart from the matter of rainfall, there is the problem of equitable distribution. The up-river tribes under an unstable government could cut new channels and increase their amount of water, and consequently place more land under cultivation at the expense of the cultivators living down-stream. Or again, an irrigation channel often passes through one or more tribal areas, and should there be other than amicable relations between the tribes - a blissful state that is not often experienced for very long - then the tribesmen at the source can stop the flow of water and destroy, in a short time, the whole of the seed or standing crops of the people relying on this source of supply.

The causes in variety of methods of assessment must engage our consideration. They are so strongly opposed to our ideas of justice and fair play that it will be necessary to make a detailed examination, in order to emphasise some of those inborn peculiarities



of the Oriental which are so well known to everyone who has ever considered them or had experience of the administration of land matters in the East. Any review of the administration in recent years must be based on a realisation of the way in which the impossible conditions which existed in 'Iraq in 1914 were brought about. A consideration of the efforts made, during the years of British occupation, will help us to determine how far it appears possible to institute equitable land administration.

The chief methods employed by the Turks in the assessment of revenue were by (a) a division of the crop, the State taking khums (the theoretical one-fifth more or less); (b) a form of appraisement of the crop valued standing; (c) the money value of the crop on the ground, after it had been cut and threshed; (d) instead of assessing the money value of the crop every year, a fixed cash assessment for a term of years. In India this method is termed a "Settlement". It is significant that, although the conditions differ, yet the share of the cultivator in 'Iraq, as in India, is considered traditionally to be 'nisf barid' - one half.

The nomad tribes one and all, were but little



under the control of the Turkish Government<sup>1</sup>. A sort of tacit understanding existed between them and the Authority so that, if the revenue at which the tribe had been assessed were paid, there was no molestation. The assessment took place annually and involved much trouble, the Arab emphasising his poverty and the Government trying to obtain the largest possible amount. The result of this annual bartering meant that their relations with the Turks were constantly strained, with or without open warfare. The Turkish Government, in order to overcome this constant strife, attempted to disguise its inefficiency by promoting tribal disloyalty. The much coveted Shaikhships were sold to the highest bidders, and rebellions among the tribes were so frequent that normal progress was impossible, and the country and its people soon became impoverished.

There was no unit in the Turkish system, and the principles of assessment rested upon a decimal basis. How and when the tithe arose, we do not know, but Muhammed gave it his sanction and it became the standard as between rulers and their subjects,

<sup>1</sup> See 'Iraq Report, 1925, p.59, for present conditions.



when both were followers of the Islamic faith. The dogma is founded on Qur'an IX - 29. "Fight them that believe not in God and the Last Day and who hold not as forbidden what God and His Apostle have forbidden and who profess not the profession of the truth until they pay tribute out of hand and they be humbled".

It has already been shown how completely the Turkish officials failed to put into practice their own laws. They employed widely the system of farming the taxes, with the result that bribery and corruption were rife.<sup>1</sup> It has been stated that in the wilayat of Basrah alone, which contained a relatively large settled population, seven-tenths of the people successfully evaded taxation. Bribery and corruption were the essence of the system employed as a means of disguising malpractice and defying inspection. The result of this form of administration is that it has almost destroyed agricultural prosperity in the country. We learn from a financial document drawn up by one Ahmed ibn Mahomed during the reign of the Khalifah al Mamun that the various tributes received in specie and kind in the Baghdad province amounted to £56,000,000

<sup>1</sup> The introduction of the system of farming revenues is attributed to Sulaiman the Magnificent (1520-66).



sterling. As a dependency of Turkey in 1854 its revenue was under £350,000. On the other hand, the irregular application of the system is seen in the history of Tekrit, where the taxes in the flourishing time of Daud Pasha were farmed for 22,000 Piastres annually, and it boasted at that time six hundred houses. In 1846 the 'farmer' paid three times this sum and yet had only half the number of houses - (68,000 piastres - £600).

The recognised Government share of revenue is known as "Khums" - one fifth - but the theoretical amount in no way represents the demand or the payment, but conveys to the Arabs the share of the crops given to Government.

In 'Iraq the Turkish theory of land revenue has been modified under the influence of Qur'anic precept and pre-existing custom, into a system of sharing on a decimal basis. On unirrigated lands, 'lift' or 'rain', the State share is one-tenth. If water is supplied by 'flow', that is, irrigation by canal, a second tenth is demanded in return for the water. Where water is obtained by lift no charge is made for it, and the land is treated for assessment purposes as if it were unirrigated. This treatment affords



an indication that, in fixing the shares demanded by them, the Turks were taking into consideration the net assets of the cultivator. It is, however, flow lands, irrigated without pumping, that constitute the important factor in agriculture in 'Iraq. On this kind of land the rate of demand of one-fifth was so universal and so well established that, in popular estimation, "Khums al miri" is widely used to denote the Government land revenue demand. But in addition, the Government generally regarded itself as the owner of miri and Sanniyah lands, and in some regions, especially on the Euphrates<sup>1</sup>, claimed an owner's share as well as the revenue, a total of forty per cent. of the gross annual produce. The basic fact seems to have been that, in a country where land is unlimited and cultivators few; where the silt brought down by the river entails heavy annual labour for the clearance of canals, and the annual flood necessitates even greater toil for the erection and maintenance of flood banks, a population

<sup>1</sup> In the middle Euphrates, when the Government was strong enough, the crop was measured, and each donum assessed to yield a fixed quantity. The yield assumed wheat and barley 500 Kilos (a half ton) per donum, with deduction for variation of quality.



of nomadic origin could not be brought to cultivate at all, unless the cultivator, the fellah, the actual worker of the plough, were secured at least a half share in the proceeds of his labours. Thus two fractions became, and still remain, rigid - one half, the "nisf barid", to the fellah, and twenty per cent, payable as tax to the Government. The remaining thirty per cent. has always been debatable. Two-thirds of it, or twenty per cent. of the gross produce, is commonly regarded as the owner's share - whether that owner be the State (miri land) or the Sultan (Sanniyah lands). The remaining ten per cent, with or without a slice of the owner's share, is the perquisite of the tribal headman (Shaikh or Sirkal), who alone is in a position to organise labour for common purposes and alone could give protection against aggression. Sometimes for a good reason, as on the Tigris between Baghdad or Kut, where the lands are high, where irrigation is usually uncertain, and the labour on flood banks prodigious, the whole balance went to the tribal headman. In other regions, for example in the lower Euphrates, the same thing happened for a bad reason - that the Government was not strong enough to enforce a claim which conditions of cultivation would



have justified. Elsewhere a bargain was struck with the result that the State claimed here, thirty-six per cent. (twenty plus twenty minus four per cent.), there, thirty-three and a third, in another place thirty, or again, twenty-five per cent - the balance in all cases being swallowed by the tribal headman, without whose active co-operation agriculture was, and still is, impossible.

Another method of estimation was on a standing crop or the heap on the threshing floor where, after the yield had been calculated, the Government share, one tenth, one fifth, or two fifths, according to the area, was put to auction. If the share was not sold, a guard was then put in charge of the threshing floor.

When assessment is considered, there are always the two methods of payment either of cash or, in kind<sup>1</sup>. In order to make an assessment in kind, crops have to be estimated by some means. In the past a method of "eye", "Kharas", has been utilised, since it conformed admirably to the general administration procedure. Owing to the amount of cultivation

<sup>1</sup> J.R.A.S., July, 1926, p.450. A suggestion is made that fluctuations in the supply of the precious metals were the determining factors in deciding the form of payment of revenue in Upper India during the Moslem period.



this "eye" estimation would be necessary each harvest time, and proved a golden opportunity for the revenue officials to enrich themselves at the expense of the central administration. This system of estimation is perhaps worse than either the 'iltizam' or the fractional demand. The official is assisted by a local Committee consisting generally of people who have no desire to incur the displeasure of the tribal chief, or even of prospective purchasers of the crop; the result is that the estimate is always considerably less than the reality. Furthermore, it must be pointed out that the shares of the fellah and landlord are of the actual crop, not the estimated crop, so that Government has to be content with a percentage of a poor estimate, and the difference goes, in the main, to the benefit of the landlord. A fixed annual sum would appeal to us as being more suitable, but for reasons easily deduced the system has not yet been adopted. Instead, we have a fluctuating assessment, and each year, the State has obtained what it could of the gross produce. This proportion, as will be realised from the variety of methods employed, varied from place to place.



In many districts the wealth of the Shaikh is very obvious; in the areas where the 'iltizam' or system of tax-farming is used, much trouble may be saved and friction reduced by allowing the Shaikh to hold the 'farm', but the Treasury loses to a considerable extent. Where a fixed demand is levied on a tribe or tribal area through the Shaikh, there is still much that is unsatisfactory; a system of remissions for good behaviour or poor crops is frequently claimed and often granted, but the Shaikh, especially where he has a strong influence, invariably collects the whole, or more than the whole amount demanded from the cultivators, and enjoys the fruits of the contest, while the officials are practically helpless.

It seems certain that the Turks deliberately preferred the fluctuating assessment, because it allowed officials to obtain supplementary pay at the time of crop estimation. The central Treasury was saved a considerable amount of money in salaries, and the method was quite congenial to all officials.

As the Sanniyah or Crown lands in 'Iraq had been the best-managed estates in the country, the system which had been utilised by the Turks was



adopted in the beginning of serious revenue administration in the whole country in 1917 after the fall of Baghdad. Owners and cultivators were encouraged to accept a compromise in the matter of dues, and Government collected a reasonable amount. This compromising attitude became increasingly difficult to maintain, and a detailed land survey policy was outlined in 1919. The idea of the investigation which was then set up, was not to create new rights, but to define those that were in existence.

Under the Turks a Tapu Department was functioning as a Department for recording rights in land. The register of title was a Tapu Sanad; it will be realised how valuable such a record would be in connection with a survey, intended to serve as a basis for assessing the revenue demand. Although much valuable work was done in this respect, subsequent conditions caused delay, and, pending an agrarian settlement which must require many years to complete, a number of temporary solutions had to be found for districts where urgent decisions were absolutely imperative.

Perhaps the most difficult was the Muntafiq division, where the divergent claims of the landlords,



mostly of the Sa'dun family, and those of the tribes, have already been explained. These temporary solutions, modified from time to time in various districts, served the British Administration, and, in spite of the difficulties which have been encountered owing mainly to the delayed peace with Turkey, much has been done towards propounding a scheme of revenue assessment which will be just. It devolves upon the officials of the new Arab State, which is under British guidance for a short time, to establish their system in the light of this experience.

The Turks had adopted the 'farming' system in the Basrah division chiefly in respect of the Amarah muqata'ahs; in the Baghdad province the system was not possible owing to political conditions. It has not been possible to eradicate all the abuses that were typical of the Turkish system of assessment, and the policy of the present Arab State cannot be expected to show rapid progress in its methods until a new generation has arisen with better ideals.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the "Table Talks of a Mesopotamian Judge" there are many interesting accounts of Arab life. Pages 111 et seqq. and 119 et seqq. set forth vivid accounts of the tax-farmers' and tax-gatherers' methods, which allow of most interesting comparison with subsequent systems. The appendix to this work states that the dirhem was of silver, the dinar of gold. The ratio between the two was very variable and the value of



The assessment in respect of the date tax is not uniform. Except in Basrah and part of Qurnah, where a fixed rate per jarib was worked out in the days of Midhat Pasha, the method of assessment is a tax on each fruit-bearing tree. This tax varied in different parts of the country from two to seven and a half annas a tree. Information is being collected both in regard to methods of cultivation and of assessment, and here a uniform rate would be more satisfactory, with variations in accordance with local conditions, such as proximity to markets, means of irrigation, or other factors peculiar to a district. There is little doubt that, in the settlement and civilisation of the tribes, the date palm will play a prominent part, and it is all the more essential that a fair method of assessment of tax should be introduced and maintained.

Basrah is the greatest commercial date-growing region in the world. It has not less than 8,000,000 palms closely grouped together on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates. Although there are some

the dirhem, which properly had about the value of a silver franc, was also uncertain. The measure of area is also explained as a space of 60 cubits in Baghdad at the time (10th century A.D.).



four hundred varieties of dates, yet Basrah has concentrated on the exported varieties, and these are reported to be not so good a quality as other types produced in other parts of the country, in particular, around Baghdad.

During the past few years the Arabs have settled down, and more and more land is being cultivated. The following details in respect of date cultivation will show how successful this branch of agriculture might easily become, provided that political conditions were satisfactory. The figures were compiled late in 1920. The accepted fact in 'Iraq is that one fellah can cultivate a jarib<sup>1</sup> on which 100 trees are planted. Each tree, in respect of fruit and fuel, will produce 25 rupees per annum. Seventy-five per cent. are considered

<sup>1</sup> NOTE: The 'jarib' is a form of land measurement used in 'Iraq, and measures 42,700 square feet, approximately five-sixths of an English acre. This measure is used for assessment of crops and other official purposes. It is quite usual, however, to hear a date grower talking loosely of a jarib as a hundred palms.

In Amarah the 'jabala', equivalent to five-sixths of an acre, is used, and in Nasiriyah and Diwanayah the 'donum jarid', measuring 2,500 square metres, is met with in this connection.



to be fruit-bearing, so that the gross yield is 1875 rupees for the year. The mallak or landlord spends in the year 200 rupees, leaving 1675 rupees to be divided between mallak and fellah. Of this the mallak takes  $837\frac{1}{2}$  rupees; 25 rupees of this sum are paid in respect of revenue, and the fellah obtains over R.67 per month. The cost of living to the fellah is about 30 rupees a month, so that there is a good margin to all concerned. The conditions existing between mallak and fellah vary in different districts. In Basrah the mallak provides the seeds, as a rule, and realises the vegetable crop which is grown amongst the palms. Outside Basrah the vegetable crop is usually taken by the fellah, minus a daily contribution to the mallak for household requirements. An average date garden contains a thousand trees and is worked by five or six fellahs. Although these figures were obtained on the workings of 1919 and 1920, and may alter to some degree as a result of altered conditions, they are sufficient to show the possibilities. The information in respect of many years proves that the production of dates is very profitable, and the country is entirely suitable to their production.



Markets are already in existence for certain classes of dates, such as the Khadrawi and Halawi, which go to England, America, and Australia, whilst the Zadhi and Berhi varieties are used for home consumption. It ought to be possible to increase the demands of foreign markets by attention to methods of production, packing, and export.

Although the date is the premier product, it is not the only product of 'Iraq; there are raw products and cereals. Up to the end of April, 1923, the total amount of the 1922 cereals exported was 163,181 tons. The growth of cotton is increasing, and progress is being made in the cultivation of silk, which is calling for commercial enterprise.

Poor estimating, or haphazard collection, make it easy for Shaikhs to amass wealth. A present further advantage is offered owing to the arrangement by which the Government share, comprising both tax and rent, is paid in cash and not in kind. A conversion rate is fixed by the Ministry of Finance with special conversion rates for special areas, considering cost of transport to market; the practice is rarely in favour of the State.

In 1919-1920 it was estimated that there were



116,511 square miles in 'Iraq, with a total population of 2,849,282. The head of population to the square mile was 24.4; the total amount received as land revenue was 160.9 lakhs of rupees, and the incidence of land revenue demand per head of population was 5 rupees 10 annas. The figures for a year under the Turkish administration, 1909, and a year, 1919, of British administration are interesting:-

1909 produced Rs 33,11,412 or £ T. 240,830, whilst 1919 produced Rs 114,45,500 or £ T. 832,400.

Extension and improvement, better security offered, a rise in prices of agricultural products, and more equable collection account for the increased amount. It was estimated in the same year that there were between four and five million date trees being grown on an area of about 60,000 acres of land which paid a date revenue of Rs 20 per acre, apart from dues on fruits, vegetables and cereals grown under the date trees.

In 1920-21 Rs 1,09,02,475 were obtained from land revenue and Rs 8,03,823 from date tax<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Report, 1925, p.132 et seqq. gives a most interesting comparison between Turkish and present times.



In certain districts under British occupation Turkish practice has been continued unchanged, whilst in others, attempts have been made to collect data which would enable a fixed demand to be made. Progress in this is necessarily slow, and it will be some considerable time before reliable assessments can be made. At Suq-ash-Shuyukh in 1919-20 a scheme for three years was prepared for a fixed cash assessment on summer and winter crops<sup>1</sup>; it was realised that the rates then adopted would have to be reviewed as further information was obtained<sup>2</sup>. The underlying idea was to introduce an arrangement in agreement with the cultivators which would help to produce a settling effect on the tribes in the district, but just as the plan had matured and had been accepted by the Government and the tribes, the rebellion reached the district, and all efforts had apparently been made in vain. The system of 'nisf barid' was prevalent in this district, and the

<sup>1</sup> A. Platts - Suq District Report, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that this system is recommended as being the most suitable for 'Iraq - vide para. 22 'Iraq Mission Report of 1925.



arrangement whereby the tribal Shaikh took half the actual crops from which he paid revenue to Government, and rent to the landlord, was quite satisfactory, and there was little trouble. Other tribes in the district had a system of "talía". The Shaikh in this case had a piece of land which was cultivated for him and exempt from dues when the apportionment of Government and landlord's demand was made. Landlords, other than Government, would make a present to the Shaikh known as "sirkala", and this led to trouble in many tribal areas, inasmuch as the heads of tribal sub-sections expected, but did not receive, a just share of the gift. The "sirkala", having in bygone days amounted to as much as one-tenth of the whole crop, it can well be seen why the sub-division led to tribal dissatisfaction.

Much actual mapping of the country has been done in recent years, and large areas have been surveyed for tapu (land registration) purposes. The work of the Survey Department should be distinctly encouraged, since it brings about large increases of revenue to the State. An interesting example of this was the work done in the Basrah Liwa date gardens from 1923 to 1926. The date tax was paid normally



on the jarib basis, and it was discovered that the owners of many date gardens had given very modest returns of the areas occupied by them. The survey and re-assessment - nervously begun - are practically completed, and revenue is now to be demanded on a fixed basis on cultivable land rather than on the crops raised.

Survey work in the area cost Rs 1,70,000, and the result of the survey is expected to lead to an annual increase in revenue of at least two lakhs. Another instance of surveys conferring a great benefit on the State arises in connection with the assessment of 'shatti' - that is land reclaimed from the river, of which there are great tracts in the Shatt-al-Arab. The traveller from Fao to Basrah notices the bunded-up lands jutting out into the river; these reclaimed portions have been built up with river silt, which is particularly valuable for agricultural purposes. The reclamation work was welcomed by the Navigation Authorities, as the narrowing of the river channel helped to increase the depth of the river, while incidentally many irrigation canals (whence much of the silt was obtained) were widened and deepened, to the great benefit of agriculture. The survey of



this reclaimed land has led to an increased value of land to the State of eight lakhs of rupees. The quoting of arithmetical proportions in respect of the Turkish system is grossly misleading, since those amounts were seldom really collected. In the earlier days of the British occupation an amount of revenue was collected, but without any real relation to the set basis of assessment, as the amount subscribed by the tribes was a mere acknowledgment of the governing power.

About the year 1919 some attempt was made at scientific measuring and classification of crops, but this effort never became general in 'Iraq. Experiments have been made in all districts, but no uniform system has yet been evolved. The faultiness of the estimation system and its natural bias against Government, has generally prevented the demand from being regarded as too onerous, but it is interesting to note that, where cultivated areas have been measured, a general reduction has resulted.

The summer and winter crops, "saifi" and "shītwi" comprise the following:-



"Saifi"

Shillib	-	rice
Idhra safra	-	maize
Dukhn	-	small millet
Idhra Baidha	-	giant millet
Mash	-	green gram
Simsim	-	sesame

"Shitwi"

Shair	-	barley
Honta	-	wheat.

The fruit and vegetable tax is, in general, one-tenth on the produce of land watered by lift, and one-fifth on the produce of land watered by flow. Various methods have been employed in assessing this tax; the following examples may show the complexity of the system. At Tekrit the melons grown in the bed of the river after the flood were assessed at one anna per "nuggra"-hole. In Nasiriyah there was a fixed demand of fifteen rupees each jarib. Another system employed was to levy three rupees a furrow, whilst in most places the "good old" Turkish methods were employed, the right to collect being "farmed" to an individual who could collect from the grower. This farming system was applied to most other taxes, such as those on tobacco, liquorice, fish, reeds and mats, salt and Kodah; Kodah is the tax on animals, at presented collected at the rate of one rupee on every



ox or camel and eight annas on every sheep.

These details of revenue assessment do not form a complete account, but are sufficient to prove how impossible it was to work out any satisfactory universal system during the period that elapsed from the Armistice of 1918, and the Turkish peace of 1923, a period that included the rebellion of 1920. The obvious conclusion that must be drawn from this survey of the methods employed by the Turks in assessing revenue is that the system worked most unfairly, since the strong gained at the expense of the weak, and, further, it was inimical to the best interests of the country and its people.

British officials have collected much valuable information, and yet there is doubt whether the "all Arab" administration will be capable of applying the results by setting up more equitable methods of assessment. The country changed very little in the fifty years preceding the war of 1914. We hope some of the experiences of those days have gone for ever. As for the Turks, we know they were easy-going to a degree, and there are a number of Arabs who would again take kindly to their form of administration. The Young Turks, with their Committee of Union and



Progress, deposed the Sultan and became very aggressive. Then came the great struggle, and for almost a decade there has been a rapid advance in the country. The motor car has conquered the desert, the motor launch has made the country craft look odd, and the aeroplane, telephone, and wireless have all combined to produce a new form of Arabian Nights Entertainment. The introduction of the new wonders of science has called forth some sacrifice, and we are driven to wonder whether the Arabs really appreciate the innovations. In spite of the local disturbances, lack of safety on the roads and rivers of the country, feuds, and strifes, there is to be seen a certain measure of contentment. Although the Arab has adopted many of the new wonders, he is still at heart a little worried. The old days of comparative quietness have passed away, and the bartering spirit which entered into almost every phase of daily existence may have been supplanted for a short time, but these things may not have been lost long enough to prevent their return with their old-time appeal.

The decision of the British Government to discontinue the subsidies to independent Arab rulers will be hailed with a feeling of gratification by all economists in Britain, but it remains to be seen whether



this economy is in the best interests. Doubts also arise as to the wisdom of adopting a uniform method of assessment.

As the Turks left 'Iraq, they destroyed all the records which were kept at headquarters, and the persons who knew anything about revenue work were remarkably few. Not only registers, but land records also, were taken away. The first decisions that were made in respect of revenue assessment were based primarily upon military conditions, and the revenue which was assessed served to provide a certain amount of foodstuff for the Army, and gave a sign to the Arabs of our authority. The confidence of the cultivator had to be obtained, and some moral effect produced, which would encourage him to continue cultivation and development where possible.

Detailed information concerning the present sources from which revenue is derived is to be found in 'Iraq Administration Report, 1925, pp.131 et seqq. which shows an interesting comparison between the years 1911 and 1924.



### COLLECTION OF REVENUE

From 'Farmer'.

Division on the threshing floor.

Nhalasiyah - an iniquitous system.

The Madhif - a national institution - the  
tribal collecting stations.

System of reaping, threshing, winnowing.

Modes of transport: River: kelleks- gufas -  
mahailas - ballums - mashufs.  
Land: camels - donkeys - horses.



'Iraq was divided under the Turkish administration into three Wilayets, Mosul, Baghdad, and Basrah, each with a Pasha or Wali, although the Baghdad Pasha usually supervised the Basrah Pasha. Each Wilayet was divided into a number of Sanjaqs or Liwas, each under a Mutassarif, and Qadhas, each under a Qaim Maqam. There were smaller divisions inside the Qadhas, each supervised by a Mudir.

A Wali had a revenue officer called a Daftardar, and the Mutassarif and Qaim Maqam had a Mudir Mal. The relationships of one official to another were not clearly defined. Land Revenue proper came under the two heads of the Muqata'ahs - with fixed or farmed revenue; and the Ushr (tithe) - a term used irrespective of the real rate of incidence. There was also a medley of other taxes: Kodah, or grazing tax, and taxes on dates, fruit, melons, vegetables, wood, fish, reeds and mats, oil, lime, bitumen, salt, liquorice, gall-nuts, tobacco, and brick kilns. Besides these there was municipal taxation.

From an economic standpoint the land and land revenue system under the Turks was as bad as could be, but it was congenial to those who worked



it, and the Arabs did not entirely dislike it.

Apart from tapu, the system was easy to understand and cheap to operate, and Baghdad and Basrah under the Turks brought in more than they cost, including military charges, and even then law and order were maintained to some extent.

The revenue demand having been assessed, it was the custom in Turkish times, either to collect the amount from the person to whom it had been 'farmed', or to collect it from the threshing floor. Both of these arrangements permitted the Arab to exercise his well-known powers of bargaining and arguing, and led to the maintenance of his reputation as a bad tax-payer. We have seen from the multiform methods of assessment that there was room for great improvement, and that the burden of the tax payer could be improved very materially, if improvements were effected in the assessment and collection of taxes.

The collection from a 'farm' of the amount of revenue was straightforward, but there were many difficulties in collecting from Shaikhs and Sirkals. The British policy in many districts was to make the head Shaikhs responsible for their areas, military



assistance being readily given them. This method had many unfortunate results. The Shaikh or Sirkal would in most cases extract the uttermost from the cultivators. It would not assist if the demand notes had been made out to Shaikh or Sirkal, since, in the main, the cultivators cannot read, and the clerk employed was only too well aware of the method employed by his chief. Needless to say, in the collection of either revenue or fine, the sum demanded from the tribe and allotted to the heads of tribal sections for collection was always well above the actual demand. The policy of supporting the Shaikh with forceful methods where necessary (and the demands were quite frequent) suited his purpose admirably. The point in favour of this policy was that other methods, such as direct collection from the smaller heads, would have led to the undermining of the chief tribal authority, and further, would lead to numerous claims to chieftainship, and the consequent breaking up of tribes, with endless quarrels and feuds. An iniquitous system is in vogue by which a "Khalasiyah", a finished payment order, is given to the payee. This means nothing, since it does not state the



amounts that have been paid either in cash or kind, and, further, even if it did, the recipient could not read it; whilst finally, if he took steps to do so, he would most certainly be asking for trouble.

During the British administration in 1919 revenue was collected from the tribes in the Qilat Sikar district on the Gharraf for the first time for sixteen years. Realising the futility of obtaining revenue, the Turks had adopted a plan about 1908 of taking <sup>an</sup> equivalent of one-fifth from the merchants exporting grain through the neighbouring towns of Kut and Qurnah.

Many tribes in this region do not cultivate but are shepherds, and come near the river during the dry season for water and grazing. The collection of the Kodah (grazing tax) from these Arabs was also a difficult task, and it was the common practice to send two battalions of Turkish troops, when the opposition was not too strong, and collect double tax as punishment. The graveyards in this district testify to the many futile efforts, and losses sustained, on these occasions.

The lot of the fellah is not an enviable one. He is always in debt either outside or inside his



tribe or both. In some cases fellahs manage to cultivate two crops yearly, but even then they gain very little. A saifi crop is usually worth more than a shitwi crop, so that the lot of a shitwi single crop producer is not very happy. Besides the responsibility of keeping himself and usually a numerous family, the cultivator in many cases has to provide seed, feed his two bullocks, and keep his "feddan"-plough in order, as well as his spade, and with all this to do, his theoretical share of the crop is two-fifths. There is one feature concerning the unfortunate fellah which is constant, that is his poverty; the tribal head, by virtue of his paramount position, flourishes in most cases and keeps open house, entertaining visitors and distributing coffee at all times of the day from the "madhif" - guest house.

The madhif is a national institution, and no man of the least importance is respected if he has not a guest house where he is prepared to entertain, where his fellow men can forgather, smoke cigarettes, and sip coffee, talk over their work, their religion, their feuds, their disputes, and where they can meet visitors to the area. The madhif is to the tribe



what the "divan" and the tea-and-coffee-shops are in the towns.

All madhifs are practically of the same pattern, with doors at either end and a half domed roof. In the centre of the floor is a mud hearth, where coffee is roasted, ground, and made. The process of making coffee is generally a source of delight to the uninitiated visitor. The coffee beans are placed in an iron tray fitted with a handle from one and a half to two inches in length. The coffee-man places these trays over a fire which he has kindled with the local fuel (thorn, dung, sticks or palm branches), and with a small spoon frequently turns over the roasting beans. After twenty minutes or more the roasted coffee is put into a mortar (in these days often an empty shell case) and ground with a pestle. The grinder loves to display his art, and incessantly beats the sides of the utensil. This finished, a row of brass coffee pots, with peculiar long-knobbed tops and trough shaped spouts are inspected, the size varying from vessels capable of holding one-eighth of a pint to others which will hold five, or even more, pints. These are arranged according to size near the hearth. Into one of the pots the coffee, freshly roasted and ground, is placed, as much as a quarter of



a pound of coffee being placed into half a pint of water. A short stick is used to stir this, and the pot is then put on the fire and brought almost to boiling point. The coffee is transferred from one coffee pot to the other in turn, the final pot being heated again. All this takes about an hour, but finally the coffee-man tastes his coffee, and guests are then helped. Each portion, which is very small, is given in a small cup without a handle, and usually three (not more) cups are given.

In the madhif scrupulous care is paid to social position, and every Arab, resident or visitor, knows his appointed place. The Arab is a lavish host, and his fame for hospitality has not been lightly founded. He is remarkably attentive to etiquette, and no number of visits will induce him to relax any of his methods of preparation, greeting, or reception. The times for carrying out his various duties and the nature of his meal are carefully worked out. While the coffee is being made in the madhif, food is cooked by the women-folk. Woe betide the anxious visitor who desires to be off quickly once he visits the Arab madhif! It would be an insult to refuse to wait, for time is no object to the tribal Arab, and he fails to realise that it can be of importance



to others. The normal Arab meals are a light one in the early morning followed by coffee; a fairly heavy meal just before midday, and another heavy meal at sunset, whilst coffee is taken at any time during the day. A rest is generally taken after the midday meal. Tea and meat are rarely seen in the madhifs. The exception is made only on important guest days, when the preparation for a meal by the women takes from very early morning until midday. The wheat or other meal has to be ground for making the bread; the sheep have to be roasted whole; many dishes, varying, according to the wealth of the tribe, from 20 to 120 have to be prepared, consisting of meat, vegetables, puddings, and in the centre the most-imposing 'koozi' is placed. This is the main food, which is placed in a huge iron tray, and made up of boiled rice, almonds and sultanas, with one or two lambs roasted whole on top. Sometimes it is necessary to employ twelve men to carry in this tray, and a hundred people take an ample meal from it. One important fact regarding all this is that nothing is wasted.

The method of procedure in the madhif is very interesting to the British visitor. At first, having removed your hat on entering the guest house, you will



greet and shake hands with the host, who will direct you to the special carpeted or cushioned seat, and the first act is to take coffee or tea, or both, and to smoke cigarettes. It is etiquette to allow the Arab host to light a cigarette for you, or even hand it to you already alight. When you are seated, the host will say "good morning" or "good evening", to which you reply. Should the visit be by appointment, food will soon appear. A circular mat of palm leaves is spread in a place near the guest. In the middle of this the tray containing the koozi is placed. Around this, plates and bowls are arranged, these having been brought from the women's quarters by the Shaikh's followers. Drink is provided in the form of liban or curds, and the British visitor can generally find sufficient appetising food from the chicken, mutton, rice, butter, curds, and sweets, and enjoy an excellent meal. Coffee is again taken after the meal, and when this is over the guest is at liberty to depart as soon as he wishes.

A spoon is generally the only utensil provided, and rice has to be taken by the fingers. The most convenient method is to form a ball and lift it in the hollow between the thumb and first finger. The Arab host will never dine with his guest, but there



may be any number of others invited to the first sitting, usually amounting to twenty, all of whom will sit on the ground in a circle round the food. Custom demands the washing of the right hand in water before and after the meal, the necessaries being provided by a follower.

This hospitality is maintained at heavy cost to the tribesman, who has a continued struggle for a mere existence. Whatever the result of any reform may be - if any - his lot cannot be made worse than it is at present.

The transport of 'Iraq might well be considered here; throughout the year there is a constant demand for the carriage of dates, grain, and common necessities.

(kelleks)  
Rafts have probably been for ages the only means of traffic in the upper parts of the rivers of 'Iraq. In order to make these the skins of full-grown sheep and goats, taken off with as few incisions as possible, are dried and prepared, one aperture being left through which the air is forced. A framework of poplar beams, branches of trees and reeds having been constructed of the size of the intended raft, the inflated skins are tied to it by means of osier bands. The raft is then complete and is moved to the water and launched. Care



is taken to place the skins with their mouths upwards, that in case any should burst, or require refilling, they can be easily reached. Upon the framework of wood are piled bales of goods and property belonging to merchants or travellers. When persons of rank or wealth descend the river, small huts are constructed for them on the raft, by covering a common wooden bedstead with a hood, formed of reeds and lined with felt. The raftsmen impel and guide the raft by long poles, to the end of which are fastened a few pieces of split cane. When the rafts are unloaded at Baghdad, the poles are sold at considerable profit for household purposes chiefly, while the skins are washed and afterwards rubbed with a preparation of pounded pomegranate skins to keep them from cracking and rotting. They are taken back up-river on donkeys.

Boats of various shapes and sizes are used in the country on both rivers. The qufa is perhaps the most interesting, since it is known that boats of this shape have been in use on the Tigris for five thousand years. In shape this type of boat is round; it is constructed of fibre, is coated with bitumen inside and out, and is practically unsinkable. A



qufa of average size can carry some ten persons; animals and produce of all kinds can be transported. The visitor to Baghdad can while away an interesting period in watching the boatmen manipulate the craft and noting the varied nature of the cargoes.

Other country craft vary in construction, size, and shape according to the needs of the district; in the upper Euphrates and on the Tigris rivers the shakhtur - a flat-bottomed boat made from wood and lined with pitch - is commonly seen. The ballam is a heavy type of rowing boat; while the mashuf is a form of canoe consisting of reeds and bitumen: this light craft is mostly utilised in the marsh areas of lower 'Iraq. The mahaila is the largest type of country craft and is used for carrying larger quantities of goods over long distances: these are mostly sailing vessels.

Transportation by land is limited to the camel, horse, and donkey.

British enterprise has already introduced more effective modes of transport by air, on water, and on land: but the Arab at large has yet to appreciate these modern innovations.



## IRRIGATION

Early times - the system of rivers and  
canals - the main canals - decay due to inundations;  
Conditions in middle ages - 13th and 14th centuries.  
Turkish occupation - Sir W. Willcocks - his report;  
The British occupation and the present Government -  
Irrigation 1918-1925; The present situation  
explained in Official Report.



The importance of irrigation in 'Iraq is of such a vital nature and is so indissolubly linked up with Land Administration that it is incumbent upon us to examine it closely.

The question of irrigation is intimately connected with the past prosperity of 'Iraq and with its present poverty. The ancient civilisation of Babylonia obtained its wealth from the land and expended this wealth in constructing vast irrigation works, which obtained for the country the title of "the granary of the world".

The physical conditions of 'Iraq have altered considerably at different periods. Changes have taken place in the courses of the rivers as the result of floods and the formation, or decay, of different canal systems. About the year 629 A.D. great floods burst the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris; in spite of the efforts of the Sasanian King to reclaim the land the swamps, thus formed, became permanent and, in the ensuing year, the irrigation works fell into disrepair.

The great lowland province which the Greeks called Mesopotamia is the gift of its two rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris; and the latter in its lower course did not run in the channel which



its waters follow at the present day<sup>1</sup>. A glance at the map shows that the sterile Arabian desert comes close up to the western border of the Euphrates, and this river has therefore no right bank affluents. With the Tigris, on the other hand, it is different; the highlands of Persia follow a line standing back at a considerable distance from the eastern side of this river, and many streams flow down from the Persian mountains, these forming numerous left bank affluents of the Tigris. The Moslems inherited from the Sasanians a system of irrigation for Mesopotamia which made this province one of the richest in the known world. The system in brief was that the Arabs effectively watered the country lying between the two rivers by draining the surplus of the Euphrates through a number of transverse canals flowing to the Tigris; while the districts to the east of the Tigris extending to the foothills of the Persian highlands were watered, in part, by the streams which flowed down from these mountains, and, in part, by a series of loop canals taken from the left bank of the Tigris and returning to it again,

<sup>1</sup> Le Strange - The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate, pp. 2 and 3.



which in turn absorbed the flood waters of the many small rivers rising in the western hills.

The greatest of the canals taken from the Tigris was the eastern offshoot, Nahrawan, some two hundred miles in length: at a subsequent period a lesser system of canals was also derived from the western bank of the Tigris above Baghdad, namely the Ishakiyah, and the later Dujail<sup>1</sup>. The four great irrigation canals which in part drained the Euphrates into the Tigris were the Nahr Isa, the Nahr Sarsar, Malik, and Kutha. By the close of the tenth century A.D. the Dujail, by the silting of its upper course, had ceased to receive the waters of the Euphrates, and a new shorter canal was then dug connecting the lower Dujail with the Tigris. In its flourishing period under the Khalifahs the suburbs of Baghdad and gardens for miles around, though washed by the Tigris, derived their water from the great Nahrawan canal.

The marvellous fertility of 'Iraq during Abbasid times was due to a strict economy of the water supply<sup>2</sup>, while nearly all the land between the Euphrates and

<sup>1</sup> Le Strange - op.cit.

<sup>2</sup> Le Strange - op.cit. p.30.



the Tigris was irrigated by the waters of the Euphrates, led off by canals flowing eastward; the lands along the left bank of the Tigris and towards the foothills of the Persian highlands were made fertile by the canals of the Nahrawan, which economically distributed the surplus waters of the Tigris to the eastward, and caught the flood of the numerous streams flowing down from the mountains of Kurdistan.

At a rough computation the soil of 'Iraq would support a population perhaps five hundred times greater than it has at present. The construction of the canals whose remnants we see, required a vast amount of labour: myriads of the human race would be required to construct even the works which are left, notwithstanding that flood after flood has diminished their numbers and extent during the ages that have elapsed since the time that they were effectively maintained. It is a wonder, indeed, that anything should remain, considering the destruction which results annually from these inundations.

During the middle ages the physical conditions in 'Iraq were entirely different from what they are



now, by reason of the great changes which have come to pass in the courses of the Euphrates and Tigris, and the consequent ruin of the numerous irrigation canals which, under the earlier Khalifas, made 'Iraq a very Garden of Eden for fertility'<sup>1</sup>.

At the present day the Tigris, following a winding course in a direction mainly south-east, is joined at a point about two hundred and fifty miles (as the crow flies) below Baghdad by the waters of the Euphrates at Qurnah. The combined rivers, now known as the Shatt-al-Arab, thence flow out to the Persian Gulf by a broad channel or tidal estuary measuring in length about a hundred miles in a direct line. In early Moslem times, and in all probability as late as the middle of the sixteenth century, the Tigris, when it reached a point about a hundred miles below Baghdad, flowed by a channel now known as the Shatt-al-Hai, a course farther to the south than the present section of the river, to Wasit, where, after expending most of its waters by irrigation channels, it finally spread out and became lost in the great swamp.

<sup>1</sup> Le Strange - op.cit. p.25.  
See also map in this book for  
position of canals.



The existence of the great swamp and the consequent change in the course of both Euphrates and Tigris is the chief matter of note in the physical condition of lower Mesopotamia during the Khalifate<sup>1</sup>, but of almost equal importance was the system of canalisation inherited by the Arabs when, after the conquest, they took over the country from the Persians. Briefly, we find that the country of 'Iraq north of the swamp was there traversed, like the bars of a gridiron, by a succession of canals which drained eastward into the Tigris, whilst east of the Tigris the Nahrawan, starting from below Tekrit, and re-entering the river fifty miles north of Wasit, effected the irrigation of the lands on the further, or Persian, side of the Tigris.

The Mongol invasion of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and the Turkish conquest in 1638 destroyed the irrigation works and with them the prosperity of the country and its powers of recuperation. Attempts have occasionally been made by the Ottoman authorities, particularly by Midhat Pasha when Wali of Baghdad, to irrigate the country

<sup>1</sup> Le Strange - op.cit. p.29.



but through lack of resources or of a strong administration, no success was attained. In 1909 Sir William Willcocks, as Adviser to the Ottoman Ministry of Public Works, submitted a scheme for the irrigation of three and a half million acres at a total capital cost of twenty-six million pounds. The first portion of the scheme, including the erection of the Hindiyah barrage, was undertaken by the British firm of Sir John Jackson, Ltd., in 1911, and the barrage was formally inaugurated in December, 1913. The investigations of Sir W. Willcocks led him to believe that, if the available water supply could be properly utilised, it would permit of the irrigation of seven million acres of winter crops and of summer crops, one million acres of rice, or three million acres of millet, sesame, cotton, etc.<sup>1</sup>

In his Report<sup>2</sup> Sir W. Willcocks states that no traveller can have failed to recognise the great difference between the delta of the Nile and the joint deltas of the Euphrates and Tigris. The Nile is in flood from August to October, and the turbid

1 & 2 Sir W. Willcocks - Report on the  
Irrigation of Mesopotamia.



waters can be retained on the land in the historical basins of Egypt and discharged back into the falling river in November. This permits of winter cultivation, without further irrigation, of rich fields of wheat, barley, beans, and clover.

Such a system of irrigation is impossible in Mesopotamia. The rivers are in flood in March, April, and May, while the floods are followed by the burning and rainless months of June, July, and August, in which irrigation must be practised if any crop is to be brought to maturity. So that while Egypt was for thousands of years the home of basin irrigation, Mesopotamia was the home of perennial irrigation.

With the future of navigation in Mesopotamia are involved two questions; first the requirements of water for irrigation, and secondly the competition between river navigation and railways. Down to the summer of 1914 the only report bearing on these problems was that made by Sir W. Willcocks to the Turkish Government upon the possibilities of reviving the irrigation of 'Iraq. Sir W. Willcocks' conclusions are summed up in the words "rivers for irrigation, railways for communications".



This report has been criticised in respect of the shortage of agricultural population; the difficulties to which the introduction of settlers would inevitably give rise; and his scheme for flood protection. It is suggested that irrigation and navigation could effectively be combined and could be made mutually advantageous for a long time to come.

All schemes for the agricultural development of 'Iraq are conditional on, and limited by, the quality and extent of the labour available, not only for the construction of irrigation works and for the excavation of canal systems, but also for the upkeep of such works and for the increased demands of cultivation.

In order to do this large sums of money are required, and the present administration is faced with the problem of providing for the proper distribution of the water of its two great rivers.

Although attempts were made to assist irrigation in the occupied territory of 'Iraq from the commencement of the British occupation in 1914, yet an Irrigation Department was not set up until 1918. The early difficulties were enhanced by the military



activities; the Tigris had to be kept permanently navigable to transport troops and stores. Careful surveys were required to supplement the work of pre-war experts, whilst the necessary materials and machinery were not readily procurable.

Pending the establishment of an irrigation staff, the revenue officials undertook the duties arising within their respective administrative districts. In the Baghdad Wilayet, where a great proportion of the agricultural land is irrigated by permanent canals, the distribution of water had to be controlled; canals had to be cleaned out. The most important work in this area was the great dam at the offtake of the Hindiyah channel from the Euphrates below Musaiyib, where effective distribution of the water-supply determines the fortunes of the Hillah and Shamiyah divisions. In addition to the work on the regular canal systems, advantage was taken of facilities for occasional irrigation. Late in 1917 an Agricultural Development Scheme was planned with the object of extending irrigation work so as to include the clearance of all canals, Government or privately owned, and to provide all possible means for extended cultivation; the work was at first



confined to a specific area on the Euphrates, but later extended to specific areas on the Tigris and Diyalah rivers.

Apart from the needs of the civil population, the Army was able to purchase between 50,000 and 60,000 tons of grain from the spring crop of 1918.

The fruit and vegetable gardens round the towns are irrigated almost always by lift, whilst this form of irrigation is used extensively.

The mode of raising water in 'Iraq is very simple. In the first place a high bank which is never completely deserted by the river, is chosen, and a broad recess is cut in down to the water's edge. Over this recess are fixed three or four upright poles, united at the top by rollers running on a swivel and supporting a large framework of boughs and grass which extends to some distance behind, and is intended as a shelter from the sun. Over each roller are passed two ropes, one fastened to the mouth and the other to the opposite end of a bucket made from an entire bullock skin. These ropes are attached to an ox, which throws all its weight upon them by descending an inclined plane. A trough, formed with wood and lined with bitumen,



or a shallow trench coated with matting, is constructed at the bottom of the poles, and leads to a canal running into the fields. When the bucket is drawn up to the roller the ox turns round at the bottom of the inclined plane. The rope attached to the lower part of the bucket being fastened to the back part of the animal, he raises, in turning, the bottom of the bucket, and the contents are poured into the trough. As the ox ascends the bucket is again lowered into the stream. Although this mode of irrigation is very toilsome and requires the constant labour of several men and animals, it is generally adopted on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates. In this way all the gardens of Baghdad and Basrah are watered, and by such means the wandering Arabs who condescend to cultivate, raise a little millet to supply their immediate wants in needy times.

A separate report for the year 1918-19 shows that a grand total of Rs 69,40,000<sup>1</sup> were spent on administration, new irrigation, maintenance, flood protection (new works and maintenance) and labour<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> One lakh = 100,000 rupees. At present rate of exchange one lakh = £7,448.

<sup>2</sup> Administration Report of the Revenue Department, 1919.



During the next year the Irrigation Department grew considerably, and at the end of 1920 consisted of eight divisions or districts for maintenance and construction, water control and river conservancy, and one Special Project District for the investigation and surveys of new canals<sup>1</sup>.

The present government of 'Iraq has decided to grant a concession for the construction of an irrigation system on the Euphrates. It is only by giving attention to the question of irrigation that the present poverty of the country can be improved.

In 1921 owing to financial reasons the Department was re-organised and reduced to three executive districts. The principal works carried out during the year included flood protection works, survey and maintenance, and the addition to cultivable areas of 213,000 acres; besides this, much advice was given to the divisional administrative authorities who sought help in small irrigation schemes.

On the 31st March, 1922, the Department consisted of (a) three executive Districts for the maintenance, construction, and water control of canals and river conservancy, (b) one special survey

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Administration Report, 1920-22



District for investigation and survey of new canals, and (c) one construction sub-division<sup>1</sup>.

The Irrigation Training College was also under the direct control of the Director of Irrigation.

The budget allotment for the directorate, including the Training College, was Rs 38,68,435 for 1922-23, as against Rs 40,19,435 for the financial year

1921-22. The Department resumed control of all works and water distribution and all regulators on important canals. Extensive repairs were carried out to the Hindiyyah barrage, and several other engineering works were completed. Extensive contour and investigation surveys were carried out for new projects, and a large number of schemes were examined for Liwa authorities.

Forty students were enrolled in the Training College for a two years' course with the object of training students for the subordinate appointments in the Irrigation Department and to replace Indian personnel.

The facts set forth in outline show that, during the years after the Armistice, continued effort was made in difficult circumstances. Wider experience has added to the knowledge of local conditions; earlier opinions were revised, and sufficient

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Administration Report, 1922-23.



information had been acquired to show the possibilities, provided the capital could be made available. The present situation has been fairly set out in the Report of the Financial Mission;<sup>1</sup> the section of the Report dealing with irrigation is so lucid that it is proposed to quote the section in full:-

Great civilisations have been maintained in 'Iraq in the past by means of irrigation. What man has done man can do, and the hope that by means of irrigation large areas of her soil now desert may some day be restored to cultivation is a reasonable one. But it is a hope that must be slow of realisation. We are deeply impressed with the magnitude of the problems to be solved before a general policy as to irrigation can even be framed. There is no surplus of unemployed labour waiting to be settled on new land. Salting of the soil is a grave question. We are informed, for instance, that lands newly irrigated by the Yusufia and Saklawiyah canals, which are the chief works recently carried out, already show a diminishing return owing to this cause. Expert opinion points as a remedy to the necessity for drainage schemes to accompany schemes of irrigation, but the problem is admittedly one for which the solution is at present in doubt. Further, sufficient hydraulic and soil surveys are not yet available for estimating the utility of particular works, far less for the framing of a general policy. Under these conditions we are strongly of opinion that it is premature to undertake any fresh works of irrigation until the problems to which we have referred have been solved, and until the preliminary information which is necessary in the matter, for instance, of surveys, has been accumulated by the studies of experts.

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Mission Report, 1925.



Programmes of expenditure on new works of irrigation amounting to 16 lakhs have been carried out in the course of the past few years, altogether with 8.5 lakhs for new works of flood protection. A further programme for such works amounting to 7.91 lakhs has been put forward for 1925-26. We gravely fear that much of this expenditure, actual and proposed, will prove to have been made upon an inadequate basis of knowledge, and to have been wasted. Prudence dictates that all schemes of fresh expenditure should be postponed pending expert inquiries, and that the work of the Irrigation Department should be strictly limited for the present to the maintenance of existing works, and to the conduct of the inquiries necessary in order that a general policy may be framed. Delay will have a further advantage. Works of irrigation on a large scale are works in which it should be possible to interest private capital. One large concession for the purpose has already been granted. The stability and confidence which are essential for the attraction of private capital need time for their growth.

We recommend, therefore, the definite postponement of all fresh works of irrigation. We include in this recommendation both those works which have not yet been fully authorised, but are proposed for the present year, amounting to 7.11 lakhs (= whole programme of 7.91-0.80 for works of preservation), and those works which have been authorised but have not yet been begun. The prospective cost of the latter category amounts to 3.6 lakhs. It includes as its principal item work on the Ghairshubar (Yusufia) canal, and lesser works on the Hasseiniyah canal regulator. Our recommendations would thus result in relieving the Budget for 1925-26 from a burden of expenditure of 10.71 lakhs. Our recommendation as to postponement does not apply to the work of repairing the Hindiya barrages which is now in progress, and which we regard as essential for the preservation of an existing work of proved utility. The above figures allow for the continuance of that work according to the present programme.

It has been stated to us that some of the works whose postponement we thus recommend, such



as the expensive Daghara Barrage scheme, the cost of which (4.0 lakhs) is included in the programme of 7.91 lakhs for new works, will serve an indirect purpose in moderating tribal disputes and promoting civil order. This contention involves matters of policy upon which we are not qualified to form a judgment. But whatever the force of the contention may be, it appears to us that it must yield to the over-riding principle that public revenues must not be wasted. We are unable to convince ourselves that civil order will be promoted in the long run by any attempt to buy peace, however indirectly it may be sought to effect the purchase.

If our recommendation for the postponement of fresh works be adopted, it will be possible to effect a substantial reduction in the staff and the cost of the Department of Irrigation, for the period during which the labours of that Department are confined to the maintenance of existing works and to scientific inquiries. We estimate that reduction at 4.5 lakhs per annum, of which about 3.0 lakhs should be realisable in the present year.

We desire to make it clear that we do not question that the future of irrigation in 'Iraq is full of hope, and that a sound policy for developing works of irrigation must be a chief concern of the Government of the country. Our recommendation in this connection is designed only to prevent the waste of public revenues upon schemes undertaken before sufficient knowledge is available to ensure that they are well designed. Costly failures, the result of premature action, can serve only to prejudice the future prospects of the country".

Naturally the Report has not been kindly received by the British interests in 'Iraq, nor by those who have worked, or are now working, in the interests of the country; the Report talks of economies and of reductions in some of the most important services in the country, the Departments of Agriculture,



Irrigation and Public Works: the very Departments  
on which the future of the country so very largely  
depends.



## SURVEY OF THE LAST DECADE

Ancient prosperity - Turkish misrule - Seljuk and Ottoman Turks.

A British opinion - further details of the country before 1914.

British Occupation in 1914 - early activities.

Land Enquiry of 1919 - delayed.

The Proposed Land Settlement.

Causes of agrarian disputes.

The defects in the Turkish attempts.

Fundamental needs in a new system.

Period 1918-20 - temporary success - Rebellion.

The Anglo-Arab Government.

The tribal system.

Revenue policy.

Agricultural methods.

Frontiers - security - Mosul.

Present difficulties and need for a satisfactory solution.



## SURVEY OF THE LAST DECADE

The ancient prosperity of 'Iraq, revived under the Khalifahs, was finally destroyed by the Mongol invasion of 1258, the effects of which were perpetuated by the Turkish and Persian wars and by subsequent years of Turkish misrule. During the whole period of its inclusion in the Ottoman Empire 'Iraq suffered from a corrupt administration, internal strife and rebellion, injustice and oppression, poverty and want. It is agreed that the elimination of the Turkish participation in the future administration is imperative; a return to former conditions would be fatal to the interests of the country. The unique position of Great Britain in this region, strategically, politically, and commercially, and the intimate connection of 'Iraq and India make the future administration of 'Iraq of vital concern to the British Empire.

One is tempted to suggest that 'Iraq was more Turkish in the days of the Seljuks, when it nominally belonged to Arab Khalifahs, than during the greater part of the period in which it was coloured in maps as a province of the Ottoman Sultans who lived a thousand miles away in Stambul. The Turk in 'Iraq



was no less of an alien than is the Englishman to-day. He was foreign in appearance, language, and customs, and his profession of the Sunni creed rendered him as odious to the large Shiah element among his subjects, as if he had been a Christian. The administrative ability of the Ottoman officials was mediocre; few individuals are remembered with credit. Security was low, justice rare, and cruel exactions were made, usually from the accessible few.

In 1910 the British Resident at Baghdad epitomised Ottoman rule in 'Iraq as follows:- "The "universal Turkish system of administration is in "almost every respect unsuitable to 'Iraq. The "Turks themselves must recognise that it is a failure "here, but probably few of them appreciate the cause, "though it is sufficiently obvious. 'Iraq is not "an integral part of the Ottoman Empire, but a "foreign dependency, very much in the rough; and its "government by sedentary officials according to "minute regulations, framed at Constantinople for "Western Turkey, can never be satisfactory. I had "no idea before coming to Baghdad of the extent to "which Turkey is a country of "red tape" and blind "and deaf officialdom, nor of the degree in which



"the Turkish position in 'Iraq is unsupported by  
"physical force. One cannot but admire, however,  
"the dogged and uncomplaining resolution with which  
"the Turkish civil bureaucracy and skeleton army  
"persist in their impossible tasks, the former in  
"that of governing according to code and paragraph,  
"the other in that of maintaining a semblance of  
"order."

This description by a singularly competent observer might well be considered as the state of affairs in 'Iraq before the war of 1914. One other factor had appeared under the auspices of the Committee of Union and Progress which had roused hopes of improvement that could not be fulfilled. The Wilayets of Baghdad and Basrah were full of disorder, and in certain parts of the country, particularly in the district of Suq-ash-Shuyukh, utter lawlessness prevailed. In Basrah, Saiyid Talib, a local notable, had openly defied Turkish rule and had conducted a reign of terror. The Turkish Government's policy of undermining the power of the Shaikhs in the tribes, where successful, led to a condition of chaos, and in many other cases had resulted in undesirable antagonism between tribal chiefs. A total misunder-



standing of tribal ownership of land had led to agrarian unrest. This originated in the Agrarian Settlement introduced by Midhat Pasha, Wali of Baghdad from 1869 to 1872. The agricultural districts of the Euphrates were chiefly affected by this, and a subsequent result has been outlined in the Sa'dun land question.

On the north-eastern frontier of 'Iraq the Kurdish tribes were beginning to formulate a desire for autonomy, a desire which has gradually grown and caused great trouble in the last few years. Whether a solution in regard to the Turks that will satisfy Kurds, Turks, and Arabs can be found, it is not easy at this stage to see. One thing is quite certain, that the future of 'Iraq will be influenced for good or evil according to the settlement of the Kurdistan question. The hope for local autonomy which had been raised in the Arab provinces of the Turkish Empire after the Revolution of 1908, could hardly be expected to have taken practical shape in the face of the system of Ottoman administration.

Throughout the long period of Turkish rule the Arab had never been thoroughly subdued, and he had been able, by threats or bribes, to evade fulfilling his obligations to the Government which, in theory at least,



had his interests to safeguard.

On the outbreak of war in 1914 the administration of 'Iraq as an Occupied Territory by the British was increasingly difficult. The JIHAD had been preached in the Mosques and emissaries were continuously among the tribes and in the towns, urging the Arabs to do battle in the name of the Faith. Although there was some response, the actual result was that the Arabs hung on the outskirts of the battle, waiting to see which side would win, and ready to attack, and rob impartially, whichever side suffered defeat.

Under the British Occupation measures were studied and introduced to restore agricultural credit, assist irrigation, and correct the injustices or inequalities of taxation. Both townsmen and tribesmen were freely consulted on their own problems and were given unrestricted access to the Officers who ruled them. The Arab in 'Iraq, by virtue of Turkish weakness, had enjoyed a certain independence. The fixed purpose of Turkey to crush the Arab nation had nevertheless become manifest. The fluctuating fortunes of our arms in 'Iraq made difficulties for the Arabs. The reverse at Ctesiphon and the events of Kut caused them seriously to consider their position



relative to British and Turkish rule, and in consequence, many Arabs who had welcomed our advance with the greatest enthusiasm in the first place, subsequently turned on us. There is hardly any doubt that the Arab had long been acquainted with the British reputation for fair and just rule. For some years before the war there had been sufficient evidence of his attitude towards the British, of his efforts to enlist the sympathy of the British Government, and of the possibility of his attempt to rise and shake off the yoke of injustice and corruption, imposed upon him by his Turkish rulers.

It must be repeated that of supreme importance to the country and its people is the settlement of land questions and a definition of the rights on the land. While the Great War was in progress, it was difficult to attempt any settlement, and temporary provisions had to be made, as more territory was occupied and administered by the British authorities.

In May, 1919, definite proposals were put forward for a systematic enquiry into land questions and the measures necessary to solve them by instituting some more rational and less irksome method for the



realisation of State dues upon the land, while yet retaining the basic principles of Turkish land administration.

The machinery was to take the form of Land Settlement Officers with the aid of the Survey Department to map out the country, and with the aid of the Courts to make suitable decisions, in order that a record of land owners might be prepared. The arrangement was modified by the excision of enquiry into title form, from the list of the Land Settlement Officers' functions, excepting cases where the determination of boundary disputes involved inquiry into title. Although the Turks had never anywhere attempted to enforce some parts of the Qanun al-Aradi, and had exempted 'Iraq from the operation of other parts, the Turkish Qanun al-Aradi was to be followed.

A shortage of competent officers delayed the work, but attempts were actually made in the divisions of Hillah, Baghdad, and Nasiriyah. By Proclamation, all persons claiming registrable rights in the areas concerned were called upon to state their claims and produce documentary evidence, if any. After a doubtful start, when few claims were put forward, the work proceeded apace, and



claimants rushed in with the most curious display of questionable title deeds and other evidence of their claim. One of the first results of the preliminary investigations was to prove what a sham the Turkish Tapu system really was in 'Iraq. According to Act I of the Tapu law, 8 Sha'ban 1276 (1854 A.D.) "No one in future for any reason whatever shall be able to possess State land without having a title deed". In spite of this, the greater part of land was held without a Tapu sanad, and even the Department of Auqaf never took out Tapu sanads for the vast properties it claimed. The curious explanation is that "the Tapu law of inheritance is not in accordance with Sharah law, which the bulk of the people regard with veneration"<sup>1</sup>. A further explanation is the high fees charged by the Tapu Department, and the subtle methods of the officials, involving extra cost to the applicant for registration. The complicated provisions of the Sharah law of succession, together with the administration of the Tapu officials, led to a state of chaos, and the whole system of land registration was a failure. The careless way in which Tapu sanads were made out, and their

<sup>1</sup> Administration of Revenue Department of 'Iraq, 1919.



prohibitive cost, nullified the effect of this branch of the Turkish administration.

The work of the Land Settlement Officers did not lead to any definite measures, as the rebellion and consequent change in administration led to a stoppage of the work, and the loss of the few capable officers who were available. No fresh sanads for agricultural lands were issued, and the Arabs saw one more abortive attempt at a land settlement. In the meanwhile, political officers did their best to prevent tribal fighting arising out of quarrels concerning land, to keep the land cultivated, to provide protection from floods, and to secure payment of Government dues.

The agrarian disputes which have been dealt with in the course of this work show how difficult this task might be. The persistent condition in 'Iraq has been instability. Whatever the development of agriculture requires, whether in controlling the rivers, in protecting the crops from floods and pests, or in providing sufficient cultivators for the soil, the essential factors are an equitable distribution of the rights in the land, a good record of such rights, and an assessment such as will provide a moderate revenue to the governing power.



It has already been suggested<sup>1</sup> that the whole question of Land Revenue in 'Iraq should be made the subject of special investigation. A system will have to be devised with a view to local conditions, and must almost inevitably embrace a general survey of the country, so that the areas, situation, and boundaries of all land, in the produce of which Government is interested, may be known; a complete registration of title should be made so that there should be no uncertainty as to whether a particular piece of land is miri or tapu, whether it is, or is not, subject to 'waqf', who is the person responsible for paying Government its due, and what are the special rights and obligations of any of the fellahs, so that security of tenure may be established. The principal aim of the new system should be the ultimate substitution of a fixed assessment for the present device of a proportionate levy on the gross produce. Further detailed information on these matters is supplied in a recent official Report:-

"Agriculture being 'Iraq's primary industry and source of wealth, it is to the revenue from this source that the State should look for its main support; this branch of revenue has not shown a

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Mission Report.



steady expansion since 1911; the actual increase has been small and is largely explicable by the higher level of prices. It is not clear in fact that there has been any increase at all. The problem is how to turn to better account (as well as for private ends) the potentialities of wealth in the agriculture of 'Iraq. Does the remedy lie in a change of the revenue system, or in better public administration, or in improved methods of cultivation and marketing, aided by the natural processes of time and season? Probably in all three combined".<sup>1</sup>

The following general conclusions of the present Ministry in 'Iraq have been tentatively put forward:-

- (i) The tithe should be definitely regarded as the Government tax on cultivated land.
- (ii) The right to use water by lift is covered by the tithe.
- (iii) Any right on the part of the Government to demand more than tithe is based on -
  - (a) its position as a landlord entitled to rent (which in the case of tapu lands has been alienated);
  - (b) its claim to repayment of the value of services rendered to the land.

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Administration Report, 1925, p.137.



- (iv) The Government rent will be calculated on the capital value of the land (as ascertained from records of sales and other similar evidence) at approximately twenty years' purchase.
- (v) The further demand (iii)(b) will be assessed with reference to the cost of the services, which will include interest and amortization charges on works, and maintenance charges.
- (vi) Final assessment of demands under (iii) cannot be made until the area concerned has been surveyed and information has been collected as to the land values and costs of services. <sup>1</sup>

Subsequent to the Armistice of 1918, and until the Arab rebellion of 1920, there was a comparatively prosperous period in 'Iraq, and much advance was made towards a settled form of government. The results which accrued lead those who saw something of the work to believe that a certain amount of good has arisen out of the evil. All concerned, Arabs, British officials, and British Government, have learned much since the rebellion, and we have seen a very desirable change in the attitude of those politicians, publicists, and newsvendors who clamoured for immediate evacuation. Gradually, the policy to which Great Britain is committed under the Mandate is being developed in 'Iraq. The Treaty signed on October 10th, 1922, was the outcome of prolonged

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Administration Report, 1925, pp.138-9.



negotiation; it fixed a term of twenty years, within which Arabs were to accustom themselves to their new constitutional surroundings. That this term was too long was soon appreciated, and accordingly, by means of a Protocol, the Treaty has been modified and is to terminate "upon 'Iraq becoming a member of the League of Nations and, in any case, not later than four years from the ratification of peace with Turkey". Under the terms of the Treaty the British Government is pledged to use her good offices to secure the admission of 'Iraq to membership of the League of Nations as soon as possible. The fulfilment of two essential conditions - the limitation of the frontiers of 'Iraq and the establishment of a stable Government in accordance with the Organic Law - makes the undertaking more precise. The policy of the Treaty and the Protocol has introduced a new era of vital importance to the Arab world. Against a hostile Turkey, bent on conquest, or even against any other hostile power, the 'Iraqis by themselves can stand no chance. It would appear from present indications that the Turks may be willing to leave 'Iraq alone when the Kurdish question has been settled.

The general substitution of Arab for British Officials is proceeding without causing any dislocation



in the administration of the country. Responsible Arab officials have profited by the experience of their British colleagues, and the new form of administration is working smoothly. The primitive structure of the Arab society in 'Iraq and the contrast between urban and rural conditions must, for many years to come, tax the patience and wisdom of the Central Government. The country is in a state of transition; in some cases the Shaikh is a leader only in name, and Government deals directly with the Sectional Chiefs; in others the Shaikh is paramount over a tribe or a confederation, and the Sectional Leaders come rarely into contact with the Executive Authority. But as a rule even the paramount Shaikh depends upon the backing of the Central Government. In no part of 'Iraq is the question of tribal disintegration easy, and, with it is found the problem of finding a substitute for Shaikh authority. The particular district of Suq on the lower Euphrates suffers most acutely from the uncertainty of tribal authority, and this is aggravated by the agrarian troubles. It can be fairly safely anticipated that the tribal system will slowly drop into decay. In connection with the Central Administration it is imperative to encourage all revenue payers to deal



directly with the local Executive. This development can only take place if the Government adopts and maintains a progressive land policy. Many factors will determine the rate of land progress, but chief amongst these will be the Government's attitude. The fertility of the soil is unquestioned and there is water in large quantities. The economic pressure which is felt in most countries at the present time should make it possible for 'Iraq to take advantage of her resources. The obsolete and discredited revenue policy which has been set up, and is still in the main continued, an unenviable heritage from the Turks, must be revised if not destroyed. The greatest criticism which may be levelled at it is that, although the cultivators pay considerable amounts, either in cash or in kind, yet the Treasury receives comparatively small portions. In the past Turkish officials, Arab landlords and Sirkals have shared the balance; to-day the absence of Turkish officials serves to increase the share of the remaining two classes. Wherever one goes, some new system is found, and it is to the interests of mallaks and sirkals to maintain, so long as possible, their own peculiar relationships with the cultivators. One



has found districts in which on the canals many old customs are still in vogue, and any variation comes almost as a revolution. A further and larger difficulty presents itself in respect of the large areas of land which cannot be developed because of the shortage of labour. Individual owners are limited in the amount of land they can undertake to cultivate and control, so that it is the business of the Government to devise some scheme which will allow of the extension of the area under cultivation. Whether the formation of land companies under indigenous or alien control, or a mixture of both, will be possible, or whether, with the assistance of modern machinery and scientific knowledge, it will be possible to meet the shortage of labour and extend cultivation: these are questions which only time and thought can solve. Any scheme which would reduce the number of revenue collectors and simplify the system of revenue assessment and collection is highly to be desired. If the Arab owners and cultivators can expect, in return for their contributions to the State, security and sympathetic consideration in matters of irrigation and scientific guidance, together with improved communications, then they will settle more and more, and development will



follow. In 'Iraq there is still a belief in many primitive methods of cultivation, but many have already realised what scientific agriculture means. The penetration of the newer ideas, however, must of course, take time, but the concentration on engines of construction rather than of destruction is a vital necessity, if the country is to be rescued from its condition of semi-barbarism and the people are to take the place of an enlightened nation. The 'Iraq Department of Agriculture, by methods of research, is collecting data which will be invaluable as the country matures and expands. The opening up of the country, the diffusion of education, and more especially the recognition that there are modes of life more profitable than that of raider and robber, will strike at the root of tribal organisation.

The Turkish system provided in theory a comprehensive scheme of education based on European, chiefly French, models. It included a sensible curriculum with primary schools, secondary schools, technical schools, a law school, two training colleges, girls' schools, and scholarships to higher schools at Constantinople. In practice the system was a comparative failure.<sup>1</sup> Social development will naturally

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Report, 1925, p.201



be very slow in the outlying provinces which are in close touch with the desert and desert institutions, and also in the more inaccessible regions such as the marshes. It will rest with the 'Iraq Government to encourage the wandering shepherd to take to permanent settlement as a cultivator by giving him satisfactory terms of tenure and securing to him his due of the fruits of his labours, by means of honest and enlightened administration. The creation of a capable and intelligent Civil Service is not the work of a day, but creditable efforts in this direction are being made by the appointment, to positions of responsibility, of men of education who, though they may be somewhat lacking in experience, bring an increasing measure of intellectual training to bear upon their task.

With a maximum period of 'four years' occupation, the political future is highly uncertain. We have created an Arab State in a land of tribesmen where tribal consciousness predominates. In India there is the ever-present trouble of the North-West Frontier, and it is a matter of speculation as to how soon we may see a similar position in respect to Kurdistan and 'Iraq. Apart from the attitude of the Kurds themselves, there is the doubtful attitude of the Turks,



who are fully capable of utilising the power behind the mountains. With a situation so pregnant with undesirable elements it seems, as yet, hopeless to talk of the proper development of trade routes by land and sea, of air services, and of desert motor services.

Baghdad, apart from its political significance, might easily become a ganglion of trade routes, with lines to Haifa and Constantinople, to Russia, Persia, and India. If, however, security cannot be guaranteed, then little is likely to be done.

The domination of personality in history is too well known to need justification. This factor is stronger in the affairs of the Middle East than, perhaps, in any other part of the world. There are not only the external relationships to be fostered and maintained by the new State, but there are, internally, many powerful individuals whose support is essential to success. There are two parties in the political world, the Liberals and the Nationalists. The former party is made up of the older families, who strive to preserve the British connection and are large land-owners. The Nationalists rule mostly in Baghdad, and partly in Mosul, and are capable of commanding support in the holy cities of Kerbala and



Najaf, and from the tribes on the Euphrates side. The quieter and more moderate opinion in the country is to be found in Basrah. On the whole, the Tigris valley inclines towards moderate opinions, whilst on the Euphrates side opinion is divided, owing partly to the proximity to the holy cities of such places as Hillah and Diwaniyah. The Muntafiq Confederation on the lower and middle Euphrates is an uncertain quantity. It cannot be assumed that the tribal elements will support or defy on any occasion. Quite apart from the tribal Chiefs, there are the Sa'dun overlords, who are capable of much annoying guile and intrigue. Bribery and corrupt practices did not die out when the Turk left, and with the advent of an 'Iraq administration we must still expect to meet them. The new phase of autonomous existence will not readily be recognised. The destiny of 'Iraq in the hands of the people with electoral power will be subjected to many trials and vicissitudes. Internecine strife is always a possibility. The crystallisation of public opinion on a national basis has not yet been effected, and the first steps cannot successfully be taken until tribesmen, as well as townsmen, have realised the necessity for supporting the central administration. In 'Iraq



nationality has hardly yet developed. Men feel the ties of loyalty to their tribe or family more than to the country. A patriotic sense of public service is often lacking. The intricacies arising out of religious and political questions together with economic factors in 'Iraq are puzzling, but the difficulties should not be insuperable.

A prolonged occupation of 'Iraq similar to that of Egypt was never intended by the British. By an accident of war the Government that had existed for three hundred years, a Government which, though inefficient and corrupt, had preserved some slight measure of law and order, came to an end. When the Turk disappeared, all signs of his sway vanished, and a widespread tranquillity was set up in 'Iraq, such as had not been enjoyed for centuries.

The outstanding difficulty - the question of Mosul - is now happily settled; in 1926 a treaty between the United Kingdom and 'Iraq and Turkey settled the frontier between the two latter countries.<sup>1</sup>

The late Lord Curzon pointed out that, geographically, ethnologically, and economically, the Kemalist demands on Mosul were unjustifiable.

<sup>1</sup> See Command Paper 2679 - H. M. Stationery Office, 1926.



Great Britain has made every effort to create a native and independent Arab State. The Anglo-'Iraq Treaty was a decisive step towards the evolution of a new relationship and an experiment in mutual confidence. We had no vested interests and no tradition of direct British authority to re-cast. Although there are still major problems, internal and external, confronting the 'Iraq State, it has already become evident that the 'Iraq Government are determined to seek right solutions and that the people are willing to accept their legislation.<sup>1</sup>

The observations of the League of Nations' Commission in Mosul could with almost equal force be applied throughout 'Iraq as a fair reflection of the mentality of the people. "There is scarcely "a single district containing several contiguous "nahiyates where anything approaching unanimity in "favour of one of the two parties can be observed."

The Commission admit that in comparison with pre-war conditions a very great deal of progress has been achieved in regard to internal policy, due to British efforts, but that the internal situation in the State of 'Iraq seems unstable. Further, it is stated that those who direct the administration have undoubtedly the best intentions, but lack practical

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Report, 1925, p.5.



experience. Serious difficulties are being encountered owing to the tension between Sunnis and Shiah, the latter being less open to modern ideas of reform. It should be noted that the Shiah are in a majority in the two Wilayets of Baghdad and Basrah, while the vast majority of the population of the Wilayet of Mosul are Sunnis.

An important conclusion is that in 'Iraq we have an illustration of how the exercise of power by a Central Authority has been flouted continuously by a comparatively small number. The tribes have retained their customary views on land rights, and have been prepared at all times to defend these rights. One of the objects of the administration must be to find a common and reliable interpretation of general experience: the tendencies of the age must be fully understood, if the Central Government is to be adequate to the task of guiding the nation. Above all, the future of 'Iraq is linked up with that of other individual States, and it cannot pursue a policy of isolation from world affairs. It is obvious from the incidents of the past few years that the internal conditions of the country are still very unstable, and at any time trouble may arise, either through religious differences between Shiah and Sunnis



or through racial differences, especially between Arabs and Kurds. Furthermore, the most turbulent tribes will be a source of constant anxiety; tribal lawlessness still lifts its head among the strong federations of the middle and lower Euphrates, nor is the machinery of administration always sufficient to quell it. Fundamental agrarian questions have yet to be solved; the uncertainty of land tenure must be removed and the grave evil, produced by the growth of absentee ownership, must be cleared away. The relations between Shaikh and Sirkal, and of both to the Central Authority, still lack definition, and the tribesman has not relinquished his primeval preference for taking the settlement of his disputes with his fellows into his own hands, without reference to the law of the land.<sup>1</sup>

The future of 'Iraq depends upon four conditions:-

(1) Security of administration and a sympathetic attitude on the part of the Government to the economic needs of the country;

(2) The increase of the cultivable areas by the creation of a system of irrigation capable of expansion as the needs of the population require;

<sup>1</sup> 'Iraq Report, 1925, p.58.



(3) The capacity of the inhabitants to undertake the heavy work which the proper development of the country will involve;

(4) The improvement of means of communication.

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# GLOSSARY

- 'AMAR. Date lands, with subsidiary cultivation under the palms.
- ARADI AMIRIYAH (MIRI). Land held by the State.
- ARADI MATRUKAH. Lands left for public use; common lands of a village or community.
- ARADI SANNIYAH. Crown lands; personal lands of the Sultan of Turkey.
- ARDU TAPU. Crown land held by any proprietor; fee simple.
- AUQAF. Charitable bequests; properties or funds entailed to pious foundations or purposes; also the Department administering these.
- BADL AL MITHL. First refusal; Government land transferred to occupants who have encroached and either planted trees or erected buildings and subsequently paid the value of the land.
- BALLADIYAH. A municipality.
- DAFTADAR. Turkish revenue official to Wali; chief revenue and Treasury official in a province.
- DA'IRAT-ES-SANNIYAH. A Government Department under the Turks which managed the Turkish Crown lands.
- DHI'RA. A unit of land measurement; the length of a man's forearm with hand and fingers extended.
- FELLAH. Cultivator.
- FIDDAN. A unit of land - acre - the work of a single plough.
- FIKH. Jurisprudence of Islam; the science of all laws.
- GHAZU. Raid by an Arab tribe.
- HAQQ TAPU. Right by which Crown land is held by a proprietor.



ILTIZAM.	An agreement, usually arranged by auction, by which land taxes are 'farmed'.
JARIB.	A measure of area; approximately five-sixths of an acre.
JEBEL.	A mountain or hill.
KALLAK.	A timber raft floated on inflated skins.
KHALASIYAH.	A form of receipt given by a Shaikh to his cultivators, acknowledging that payment of dues has been completed.
KHARAB.	Palm groves without subsidiary cultivation.
KHARAS.	'Eye' estimation of crops.
KHUMS.	Theoretical share of revenue due to the State.
KODAH.	Grazing tax.
'LIFT' LAND.	Land not irrigated by canal.
LIWA.	A district governed by a 'Mutasarrif'; approximately the same as a Turkish Sanjaq.
MAJLIS.	An appointed body who act as arbitrators in tribal disputes and settle according to tribal customs.
MALLAK.	Landlord.
MALLAKIYAH.	Landlord's dues from land.
MASHUF.	A light reed canoe covered with bitumen used in Lower 'Iraq.
MIRI LAND.	Unalienated land.
MUDIR.	Turkish official in charge of a Nahiyah.
MUDIR MAL.	Revenue official to Mutasarrif and Qaim maqam.
MULK.	A title for land which is possessed freely and unconditionally by the owner with actual and legal powers of disposition - governed chiefly by the Shariah (sacred law). Corresponds to English 'freehold' and passes by inheritance, gift, or will; it escheats only on the failure of heirs.



MULTAZIN.	Tax-farmer.
MUQATA'AH.	A large estate having a fixed or farmed revenue.
MUQTU'.	Fixed assessment.
MUTASARRIF.	Turkish official in charge of a liwa or sanjaq.
NAHIYYAH.	A sub-district governed by a Mudir; several nahdiyyahs make up a qadha.
NISF BARID.	The fellah's theoretical share of the crop.
NAQIB.	Semi-official head of the community of sayyids in a place. Of great consequence in Baghdad.
QADHA.	Sub-division of a liwa; intermediate between sanjaq (or liwa) and nahdiyyah.
QAIMMAQAM.	Official in charge of a district.
QANUN AL ARADI.	Land Code.
SHAKHTUR.	A flat-bottomed wooden raft.
SAIFI.	Summer grains.
SANJAQ.	Sub-division of a Wilayet, governed by a Mutasarrif.
SARAI.	Government offices.
SHARIAH.	Moslem sacred law.
SHITWI.	Winter grains.
SIRKAL.	Agent on land.
SIRKALA.	A present often made by landlords (other than Government) to sirkals at the time of revenue reckoning.
TALIA.	A piece of land cultivated by tribes for the Shaikh not included in the apportionment of revenue dues.
TAPU.	A form of land tenure introduced in the nineteenth century; then this type of registration and the Department dealing with it. The Department is concerned with the Government's right of ownership over unalienated miri lands and escheated urban or arable properties.



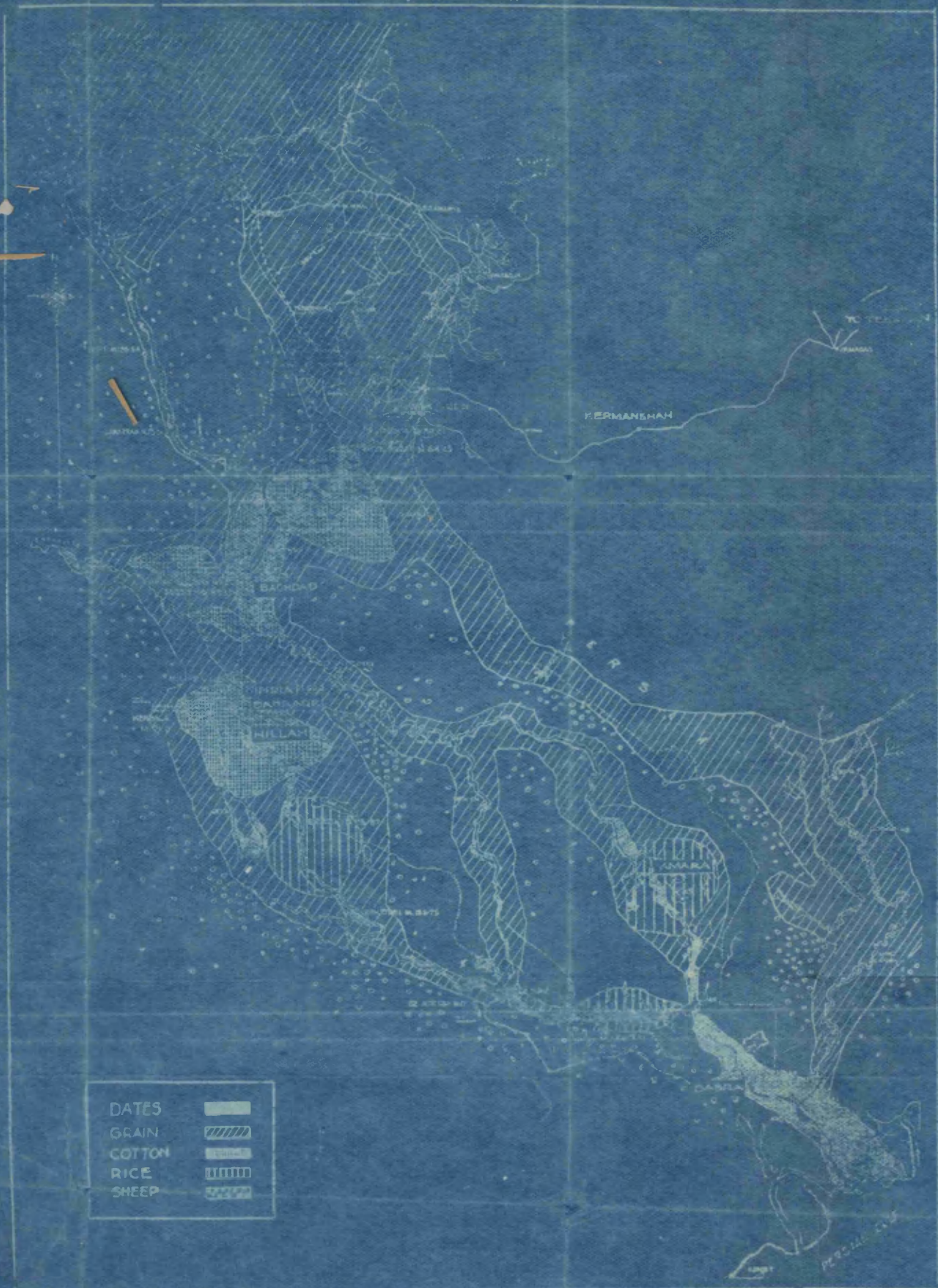
TAPU LAND.	Land alienated by Government: the position appears to be that all lands, excluding urban mulk (freehold) properties, belong primarily to the State and that good title to such lands can only be obtained in consequence of alienation by Government.
TAPU SANAD.	A copy-hold title deed for land held under the Ottoman Sultan or Government.
TASARRUF.	State dues; tithe and other taxes.
'USHR.	Tithes - the common tax; a term used irrespective of the real rate of incidence.
'UQR.	A form of right on land; differs from Tapu since the 'Uqr holder, unlike the Tapu tenant, has no right of possession, and cannot interfere in the management of the land.
WILAYET.	A province under a Governor-General (Wali); later form of Ayalat, the largest administrative unit in the Turkish Empire.
WADI.	A valley; usually a dry river bed.
WALI.	A Turkish official Governor in charge of a Wilayet.
WAQT.	Endowment for pious purposes.

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# MAP OF IRAQ & ADJOINING LANDS

Shewing Cultivated Areas,\* (Dates-Grain-Cotton and Rice)  
and Sheep Grazing Grounds



Owing to cultivation in certain sections being only in the experimental stage this map can only be considered approximate.

This shows distribution of sheep in spring, in late summer and winter. There is no desert grazing and sheep congregate on oases and river banks, there are no sheep on rice areas.



Copie du Projet d'Irrigation de  
la Basse Mesopotamie, dressé par le  
Département d'Irrigation du Ministère  
des Travaux Publics du Royaume de  
l'Irak,

indiquant la frontière revendiquée par le  
Gouvernement Turc et le réservoir de la zone  
du Diala.

Copy of the Irrigation-project for  
Lower Mesopotamia as established  
by the Irrigation Dept. of the Min.  
of Public Works of Iraq,

showing the frontier claimed by Turkey and  
Diyala Reservoir.

ÉCHELLE :  
SCALE :

1:3000000

0 30 60 90 120 150 Km

1:240/215 Km







## RETRAITE DES DIX MILLE

**TABULA** conspectum exhibens Regionum omnium quas **CYRUS JUNIOR** Artaxerxes bellum illud in Asia  
ac Cyro in acie cecidit, auxiliares Graeci perierunt ad mentem Xenophontis collecta atque hoc iterum locorum nominibus illustrata.

In usum fructuum **CHRISTIANISSIMI FRANCORUM REGIS** elaborata.

A **Gualtero Delisle** Primario **SUAE MAJESTATIS CHRISTIANISSIMAE** Geographo ac Regiae Scientiarum Academiae Socio.

*PARISIIS, apud Audouin in Regia, sub aedificii la Rue des Noyers.*

*MDCC LXXX.*

## MONITUM

Unusquisque Persarum Imperio Persarum finis -  
puncta minuta, universa Imperii potentia, et propria,  
essentia, Imperiorum aut Regnum libere designant.  
Curatorem autem statuere debemus, quod Regnum, Fluvii,  
Montes, etiam duplici lineam ducta, constantibus scriberetur,  
quod dubitaverit non potuit, sed in primis nominibus, et figuris.







TRIBAL MAP OF  
ARABIA

Names of Tribes are Printed in Red.

Scale: 180 Miles to 1 Inch.

Miles 100 0 100 200 Miles.

36° East of Greenwich.